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THE LIFE OF EDWIN BOOTH

By
William Winter

Illustrated

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LIFE AND ART OF EDWIN BOOTH

PORTRAIT BY SARGENT. ARTOTYPE, E. BIERSTADT, N. Y.

EDWIN BOOTH.

LIFE AND ART OF EDWIN BOOTH

BY

WILLIAM WINTER

"He's gone, and with him what a world are dead"

LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN
PATERNOSTER SQUARE
1893

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TO

Thomas Bailey Aldrich

REMEMBERING OLD AND HAPPY TIMES

I DEDICATE THIS MEMORIAL

OF OUR FRIEND AND COMRADE

Edwin Booth

FOREVER LOVED AND HONOURED

AND FOREVER MOURNED

"There is a world elsewhere"

PREFACE.

In writing this memoir of Edwin Booth I have largely expanded my sketch of him that was published in 1872, *in association with portraits by William J. Hennessey, under the title of Edwin Booth in Twelve Dramatic Characters. That sketch, brief and meagre and now superseded, has long been out of print, and it is inaccessible. I have also drawn upon scattered essays of mine, in the New York Tribune since* 1865, *and in other publications. This biography rests upon intimate personal knowledge of the subject, and upon information furnished to me by Booth himself. He was aware that I intended to write his Life, and he expressed approval of that intention: for he knew that I honoured and loved him; that I had followed his career with sympathy and studious attention, ever since his return from California, in* 1856; *and that I was acquainted with it, and with his views and feelings respecting it. The story is that of a dreamer, who, nevertheless, threw himself into the strife of action; a simple gentleman, who was often perplexed and bewildered, "among the thorns and dangers of this world." The chief public work of Booth's life was his effort to establish a great theatre, to be conducted in a high and liberal spirit, and to be devoted to all that is grand and fine in dramatic literature and art. In what manner that work was done, and for what reasons it ended in adversity, this narrative could not omit to declare,*

even though the record contains some censure of persons no longer alive. The duty of the historian is to write the truth, and it is no fault of his if the truth be sometimes unpleasant. Upon Booth's art and influence as an actor, and upon his character and conduct, I have endeavoured to cast ample light. His importance to the world is the justification of his biography. The commemorative words that it was my privilege to write, in the Tribune, on the morning after his death, will perhaps best express at once the reason for this book, and the conviction and feeling with which it has been written: —

A blow that has long been expected has at last fallen, and Edwin Booth is dead. By this death the community loses the foremost and the best of American actors, and one of the greatest tragedians that have ever lived. To the sufferer himself the end came as a merciful release from misery. Booth's illness, obviously from the first, was of a fatal character, and the wasting pain with which it was accompanied not only could not be cured but could scarcely be mitigated. To his friends — and no man was ever blessed with more profound and constant affection — the loss is a bitter bereavement; but they have a reason for submission and patience, when they consider what he has been spared, and they have a great consolation when they remember what a noble character he developed; what a beautiful life he lived; with what undeviating purpose and splendid integrity he used the faculties of genius for the benefit of art; what an ideal of purity, stateliness, and grace he fulfilled; what blessings of goodness he diffused, and what a stainless and radiant example he has left. If it be success — and in the full sense of that word it certainly is success — so to live that the

world shall be better for your presence, and your fellow-creatures shall be strengthened and ennobled by your influence, Booth had a life of splendid triumph: and now that it is ended he sleeps in blessings and his laurel can never fade.

Impelled equally by instinct and a sense of duty, Booth took a high and serious view of life, and he never paltered with it. His sense of humour was especially acute; yet it never made him frivolous, still less did it ever degrade him to the level of the commonplace. His mind was noble; his spirit was grave, contemplative, and intense; his temperament, although sombre, was sweet, and his feelings, although reticent, were tenderly sensitive and affectionate. He was devoid of egotism and conceit. He was, indeed, proud and resolute, but, at the same time, he was constitutionally humble and simple. No man was ever less thoughtful of himself or more considerate of others. No man was ever more genuine. He took no reward that he had not earned and no honour that was not entirely his due. From the first he fixed his eyes upon the loftiest height. He steadily attempted great things, and his attempt was justified by his deed. In singleness of purpose, in devotion to spiritual, moral, and intellectual beauty, in allegiance to art, in poise of character, in cheerful patience, in benignity and sweetness, in fidelity to duty, in simplicity and dignity of life, in scope and height of artistic purpose, and in worth of artistic achievement, whether as a man or as an actor, he was an exceptional person, an honour to human nature and a blessing to his time.

Much is heard in this period about the influence of the age upon individual character, and — in the dramatic

world — about the compelling power of the public taste. The practical recognition of those forces as rules of conduct is the resource of intrinsically weak and subordinate minds. Original, powerful, and independent, Booth walked in the pathway that was natural to him, fulfilled his destiny, and made and held his audience from first to last. Never did he condescend to the popular caprice. Never did he regulate his professional conduct by consideration of any theory as to the alleged desire of the multitude. He proceeded on the simple doctrine that the best plays in the language are the plays that ought to be presented, and that the highest style of dramatic art is the style that ought to be displayed. Those plays he produced, and of that style of art he was a conspicuous and victorious exponent. He gave the people, not what they are supposed to want, but what they ought to have; and he so impressed them by his sincerity, and so fascinated them by his genius, that during a stage career of forty-two years they followed his leadership with ever-increasing admiration, sympathy, confidence, and delight. In thousands of homes, all over the land, the feeling of the hour is not simply regret for the death of a great actor, but sorrow for the loss of a personal friend. In thousands of hearts, during the generation now closing, life has been made fuller and richer by the ministration of his beautiful art; and for a time it must indeed seem lonely and bleak, now that he has become only a memory.

"*Good-night, sweet Prince;*
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

July 28, 1893.

W. W.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

THE LIFE OF EDWIN BOOTH 1

THE ART OF EDWIN BOOTH 161

Hamlet 161

King Lear 177

Macbeth 185

Othello and Iago 192

Shylock 198

Richard the Second 201

Richard the Third 207

Brutus, Cassius, and Antony 214

Richelieu 223

Bertuccio 228

Sir Edward Mortimer 231

Pescara 235

Lucius Junius Brutus 239

Various Characters 243

MEMORIALS 265

Sargent's Portrait of Booth 265

The Booth Family 266

Mrs. Clarke's Memoir 268

Play-Bill at Centenary of Booth's Hamlet 269

The Hamlet Medal 271

The Wilkes Booth Tragedy 271

MEMORIALS, *Continued.*

PAGE

Booth's Theatre 272
The Booth Festival, June 1880..... 273
Poem on Booth by William Winter..... 276
German Trophies..... 278
Address by Edwin Booth: The Poe Memorial 280
Address by Edwin Booth: The Actors' Monument 281
Speech on Booth by William Winter..... 283
Booth's Latest Professional Tours..... 287
Chronology of the Life of Booth..... 293
Booth's Last Appearance..... 298
Tributes..... 298
The Booth Memorial Window, at Newport..... 300
The Booth Burial Place, at Baltimore..... 300
Booth's Funeral 302
Booth's Grave, at Mount Auburn..... 305
Booth's Letters..... 306

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

PORTRAIT OF BOOTH. AT "THE PLAYERS" . . . *Frontispiece*
From a painting by John S. Sargent.

Opp. page

BOOTH'S BIRTHPLACE AT BELAIR, MARYLAND 3

BOOTH AT NINETEEN 8
From a painting by A. Andrews.

JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH 12

MARY DEVLIN BOOTH 22
From a painting by Eastman Johnson.

BOOTH'S HOME AT DORCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 30

BOOTH'S THEATRE, NEW YORK 48

THE FIRST PLAY-BILL OF BOOTH'S THEATRE 57

JOSEPH JEFFERSON AND JOHN S. CLARKE, AS DR. PANGLOSS AND ZEKIEL HOMESPUN 94

BOOTH AS HAMLET 104
From a bust by Launt Thompson.

BOOTH IN 1889 134
From a photograph by Sarony.

BOOTH AS HAMLET 159
From a drawing by W. W. Scott.

BOOTH AS IAGO 190
From a photograph by Sarony.

BOOTH AS RICHELIEU 221
From a photograph by Sarony.

BOOTH AS BERTUCCIO 228
From a drawing by W. J. Hennessy.

BOOTH AS BENEDICK 254
From a drawing by W. J. Hennessy.

NOTE.

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W. W.

I.

THE LIFE OF EDWIN BOOTH.

"The purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold, as 't were, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." — *Hamlet.*

"We hear Shakespeare's men and women discussed, praised, liked, disliked, as real human beings; and in forming our opinions of them we are influenced by our own characters, habits of thought, prejudices, feelings, impulses, just as we are influenced with regard to our acquaintances and associates."

— *Mrs. Jameson's Characteristics of Women.*

"Thou gav'st me Nature as a kingdom grand,
With power to feel and to enjoy it. Thou
Not only cold, amazed acquaintance yield'st,
But grantest that in her profoundest breast
I gaze, as in the bosom of a friend.
The ranks of living creatures thou dost lead
Before me, teaching me to know my brothers
In air, and water, and the silent wood."

— *Goethe's Faust: Bayard Taylor's Translation.*

"Earthly fame
Is fortune's frail dependant; yet there lives
A Judge, who, as man claims by merit, gives:
To whose all-pondering mind a noble aim,
Faithfully kept, is as a noble deed;
In whose pure sight all virtue doth succeed."

— *Wordsworth.*

LIFE AND ART OF EDWIN BOOTH.

I.

THE LIFE OF EDWIN BOOTH.

IN the beginning of this century the principal tragic figures on the American stage were Hodgkinson and Cooper. About the middle of the century the reigning theatrical monarch was Edwin Forrest. A little later the sceptre passed into the hands of Edwin Booth, and by him it was held for about thirty years. During the period of Cooper the spirit and tone of the American theatre were English. America, theatrically, had not ceased to be a province of England. Under the influence of Forrest, and later of Charlotte Cushman and E. L. Davenport, the American stage began to assume a distinctive character. Its growth, since then, in the elements of individuality and theatrical prosperity, has been rapid, continuous, and luxuriant. The transition from Forrest to Edwin Booth marked the most important phase of its development. Forrest, although he had a spark of genius, was intrinsically and essentially animal. Booth was intellectual and spiritual. Forrest obtained his popularity, and the bulk of his large fortune, by impersonating the Indian chieftain Metamora. Booth gained and held his eminence by acting Hamlet and

Richelieu. The epoch that accepted Booth as the amplest exponent of its taste and feeling in dramatic art was one of intellect and refinement. The tendency of theatrical life received then a favourable impulse which has never ceased to operate. Other forces have helped to accelerate progress, and to foster the higher elements of the drama; but it was the influence of Edwin Booth that cleared and smoothed the way. Wallack was cheered by it, in the management of that theatre which long held the first position. Jefferson, in consequence of it, more readily found a public that was appreciative of his gentle genius and delicate art. The brilliant career of Augustin Daly as a manager became more easily possible, and so did the thoughtful, ambitious, public-spirited enterprise of Albert M. Palmer. That intellectual and noble actor, Lawrence Barrett, who made Booth his model, was, in a great degree, the direct consequence of it. Every appellant to the best order of public taste — Henry Irving, Ellen Terry, Genevieve Ward, Mary Anderson, Helena Modjeska, Ada Rehan, Richard Mansfield, Edward S. Willard, Charles Wyndham, Toole, Mrs. Langtry, the Kendals, each later votary of acting — found a readier hearing and an easier conquest, because Edwin Booth's ministrations had developed acuteness of perception, diffused refinement, awakened emotion, imparted spiritual knowledge of a lofty ideal, and provided a high standard of dramatic art. The structural change in acting that has marked our period is a change from elaborate artifice to the studied simplicity of nature; but the stage does not subsist by styles and fashions. The essential vitalising power is that of elemental genius, which awakens and

BOOTH'S BIRTHPLACE AT BELAIR, MARYLAND.

perpetuates a passionate devotion to great ideals. That power was possessed and exerted by Edwin Booth, and the prosperity of all good things upon the American stage, within the generation now closing, is largely attributable to the abiding force and charm of his fine individuality, the purity and beauty of his dramatic art, and the integrity of his example.

Edwin Thomas Booth was born on his father's farm, at Belair, Harford County, Maryland, on November 13, 1833, being the fourth son of Junius Brutus Booth — a name as brilliant in the annals of the American stage as that of Edmund Kean, whose rival he was, in the annals of the stage of England. The elder Booth was then thirty-seven years old, had been for seventeen years an actor, and was in the meridian of his life, his greatness, and his fame. Between him and Edwin there existed a deep, fervent, undemonstrative sympathy. As Edwin grew, his close companionship seemed to be more and more needed and desired by his father, and he was frequently taken from school to accompany that great actor in professional expeditions. The early training that he received was fitful and superficial. Experience of the world, however, and sometimes rough experience, combined with irregular tuition to develop his mind and mature his character. As a boy he was grave, observant, thoughtful, appreciative of his surroundings, and especially reticent. At an early age he began to travel with his father, and was the chosen guardian of that wild, strange genius, possessing a greater influence over him than was exercised by any other person. That association, operating upon hereditary temperament, wrought its inevitable result in mak-

ing Edwin Booth an actor. The singular life that he saw and led — a life in which fictitious emotions, imaginative influences, and the trivialities of every day are singularly blended — exerted its charm upon a sensitive youth, at once alluring him toward the stage and preparing him for its pursuit. His immediate entrance upon a theatrical career was made precipitately and was accidental. It occurred at the Museum in Boston, on September 10, 1849. The elder Booth was then playing there — the last but one of the engagements that he filled in that city. Cibber's version of *Richard the Third* had been cast, and the prompter of the theatre, to whom was allotted the minor part of Tressil, desirous to be left out of the bill, persuaded Edwin to take his place. That arrangement was made without the knowledge of the father, nor until the night before the announced performance did he learn that his son designed to appear; and he did not approve of the design when at length he became aware of it. From the first, indeed, and for some time, the elder Booth opposed his son's adoption of the stage. Nevertheless Edwin persevered in it, and soon his father became reconciled to his course. The Museum appearance attracted only a momentary attention, but that effort was followed by more ambitious attempts. At Providence, in the same season, the young aspirant played Cassio, in *Othello*, and Wilford, in *The Iron Chest* — his impersonation of the latter part being accounted especially auspicious. At the Arch Street theatre, Philadelphia, then managed by Edmon S. Connor (*obiit* 1892), his performance of Wilford met with particular approbation. Another of his juvenile efforts, in which careful observ-

ers discerned the germ of excellence, was his embodiment of Titus, in John Howard Payne's tragedy of *Brutus*. Once, in Washington, when the elder Booth enacted the stoical yet tender hero of that tragedy, Payne was one of the audience, and he expressed cordial approbation of Edwin Booth as Titus.

For more than two years, in a desultory manner, acting with his father in various cities, east and south, the beginner continued to advance. The period of Booth's advent and novitiate as an actor was notable for much theatrical activity and for the presence of many interesting players, especially on the southern circuit. About 1848–49, for example, William Rufus Blake, H. A. Perry, Charles Burke, James Stark, William Chippendale the elder, and George Jordan were members of the stock company — engaged, and prosperous, for the full season — of the Richmond theatre ; and that was a company which could not easily be matched now, in any city of the Republic. In 1851 Joseph Jefferson and John A. Ellsler managed in Charleston, and frequently acted in neighbouring cities. In 1858 the stock company of the Richmond theatre, then managed by John T. Ford, comprised, among many others, Joseph Jefferson, Edwin Adams, and Mary Devlin. It was in that season, at the Richmond theatre, that Edwin Booth appeared as Henry the Fifth ; Shakespeare's historical play having been then produced for the first time in the United States. Those facts indicate the class of players and the kind of dramatic entertainment that abounded in southern cities. M. W. Canning, at about that time, managed in Montgomery, S. B. Duffield in Mobile, and John Green ("honest John") in Nashville. Jarrett and

Ford were young managers in Baltimore; and in their stock companies and among their associates were John E. Owens, Joseph Jefferson, John S. Clarke, Edwin Booth, Edwin Adams, C. W. Tayleure, and H. L. Bateman. The Baltimore home of Bateman was then the headquarters of theatrical life in that region. The Bateman girls, infant prodigies, already gave denotements of a bright future. Old Joe Cowell was present, with his quips and cranks. And from that coterie have emerged leading actors, famous on both the English and American stage, and managers who have succeeded alike in New York, Washington, and London. Booth's first appearance on the New York stage was made early in his career, as also was his first attempt in the character of Richard the Third. The first of those events occurred on September 27, 1850, at the National theatre, Chatham street, where he played Wilford, to his father as Sir Edward Mortimer. The second occurred at the same theatre in 1851, when, at his father's command, and on a night set apart for his father's benefit, he undertook Richard. Only a brief notice was given to him. The Richmond was John R. Scott, a tragedian of approved talent, who once enjoyed a considerable repute. Illness was assigned by the elder Booth, as the cause of his withdrawal from the bill; but it was surmised that the illness had been feigned in order that Edwin might suddenly be put to a severe practical test. While the young actor was putting on the garments of Gloster a friend stood near, holding the play-book and hearing his recital of the part, to make sure that he was possessed of the text. No announcement was made of a change in the cast, and not until Edwin stood upon the

stage, and the applause intended for his father had abruptly lapsed into silence, did the gravity of the situation appear. The assemblage received the new Gloster with surprise and coldness. An eager throng had gathered, to see a famous tragedian in his most characteristic embodiment. It might well have been astonished at sight of the stripling in place of the giant. Its behaviour, however, was considerate and generous. As the performance proceeded the identity of the actor became manifest, and so did his unexpected power. Pleasure soon succeeded to surprise, and hearty approval finally rewarded a courageous effort. Edwin was called out, at the end of the play, and Scott, who had led him forward, responded to the public greeting, and spoke the gratitude of the adventurous performer.

Those were the first steps; but it was in California that the hardest work of Edwin Booth's early professional life was performed, and there his first substantial success was gained. His eldest brother, Junius, had visited California, and had brought back alluring reports of opportunity for the rapid acquisition of wealth. It was his conviction that his father would have great prosperity in that Eldorado — where yet the gold fever of 1849 was epidemic — and he urged the wisdom of a visit to that region. The plan did not at once commend itself to the elder Booth; but ultimately, though with reluctance, he adopted it. When free from the insanity which lurked in his noble nature, and sometimes grievously afflicted it, the elder Booth was a man of delicate temperament, sympathetic with whatever is best of refinement and dignity in old civilisation, and, therefore, he was averse to contact with the asperities incidental

to a new state of society. Hence, perhaps, the apprehensive solicitude with which he shrunk from the untried, turbulent field of adventure thus opened before him. A dark presentiment may have mingled with that feeling — a foreboding which was justified by the event, when at length he had journeyed to the Golden Gate. That expedition was made in July 1852. Edwin had been left at home; but the father soon stopped and sent back for his boy, and together they proceeded to San Francisco. Booth's stay in California lasted three months. His first engagement, of eighteen nights, was played at the Jenny Lind theatre, and it was remunerative, both in reputation and profit. Edwin and Junius were members of the stock company. From San Francisco the party went to Sacramento, and failed — the money that had been earned in the one place being lost in the other. During their stay in Sacramento the father and the sons took benefits. For that of Edwin *Venice Preserved* was chosen — the elder Booth playing Pierre, and Edwin playing Jaffier. It had long been the stage custom to dress Jaffier in a black velvet tunic and consonant trappings, not unlike the garb that is worn by Hamlet. Seeing the youth in that dress his father looked at him pensively and sadly, and at last said, "You look like Hamlet; why didn't you play that part for your benefit?" — "I will, if I ever have another," the young actor answered. That scene and those words came back upon his memory in later days, when the opportunity came for him to play Hamlet, and when, in fulfilment of this pledge to his dead father, he acted that part. It proved the chief means of his development, fortune, and fame, and the chief incentive to the affectionate admiration of his countrymen.

BOOTH AT 19.

From a painting by A. Andrews.

(In possession of T. J. McKee).

Junius Brutus Booth, father of Edwin, was born in St. Pancras parish, London, in 1796. His father was a lawyer. His mother was a descendant of John Wilkes, the agitator. In early life he seems to have been what Longfellow designates a "miscellaneous youth and a universal genius." He showed talent for painting. He entered the British navy. He learned the printer's art. He dabbled in literature. He became a sculptor. At last he found his true vocation and adopted the stage. His debut was made at Deptford, on December 13, 1813, when he acted Campillo, in Tobin's comedy of *The Honeymoon*. His first appearance in London was made in 1815, as Sylvius, in *As You Like It*. A little later he made a hit, at Brighton, as Sir Giles Overreach. On February 12, 1817, he played at Covent Garden as Richard the Third, and gained some success, against bitter opposition. In 1820 he was married to Miss Mary Ann Holmes, of Reading, England, who accompanied him to America, in the summer of 1821. His first professional appearance in the United States was made on July 13, 1821, at Richmond, Virginia, as Richard the Third. He then came to the Park theatre, New York, where he made a marked impression; and that he deepened by playing successful engagements throughout the country. In 1822 he bought a farm in Maryland, which he owned all his life, and left to his widow and children. After his first tour of the States he made a visit to England, but he came back in 1824. His last appearance in the North was made at the New National theatre, New York, September 19, 1851, when he acted Sir Edward Mortimer and Shylock.[1] The death of Edwin

[1] A study of the elder Booth's acting, made by Thomas E. Gould, under the title of *The Tragedian*, thus describes him: "Mr. Booth was short,

Booth's mother occurred in New York, at No. 339 West Twenty-third street, on October 22, 1885, in her eighty-fourth year. She was buried in the grave of her husband, at Baltimore.

The family of Junius Brutus Booth comprised ten children: Junius Brutus, Rosalie Ann, Henry Byron, Mary, Frederick, Elizabeth, Edwin, Asia Sidney, John Wilkes, and Joseph Adrian. Junius died September 16, 1883. The sole survivor (1893) is Joseph. The middle name of Forrest has been incorrectly ascribed to Edwin. His middle name was Thomas, but he did not use it, except in legal documents. He was named Edwin, after Edwin Forrest, and Thomas, after Thomas Flynn, the comedian, both of whom were among his father's friends.

In October 1852 Junius Brutus Booth bade farewell to his sons, and set forth on his homeward journey from

spare, and muscular; with a head and face of antique beauty; dark hair; blue eyes; a neck and chest of ample but symmetrical mould; a step and movement elastic, assured, kingly. His face was pale, with that healthy pallor which is one sign of a magnetic brain. Throughout this brief, close-knit, imperial figure, nature had planted and diffused her most vital organic forces; and made it the capable servant of the commanding mind that descended into and possessed it in every fibre. . . . Nature was the deep source of his power, and she imparted her own perpetual freshness to his personations. We could not tire of him, any more than we tire of her. His art was, in a high sense, as natural as the bend of Niagara; as the poise and drift of summer clouds; the play of lightning; the play of children; or as the sea, storm-tossed, sunlit, moonlit, or brooded in mysterious calm — and his art awakened in the observer corresponding emotions."

Edwin Booth wrote an essay on his father's acting, and also an article on Edmund Kean, — thoughtful in substance and simple in style, — which may be found in *Actors and Actresses of Great Britain and America*, a valuable book, edited by Laurence Hutton and Brander Matthews.

California. Before parting with Edwin, whom he had determined to leave in that country, he spoke to him gravely, and indicated the necessity of learning the art of acting amid circumstances of comparative independence. The parting was a wrench, but no doubt it was wisely made. Left to himself, the young actor would strive with freer zeal, and with better chances of success, than when constrained beneath the constant observation of his father, and, in the public gaze, overshadowed by the greatness of the abler and more famous actor. There comes a time in every young man's life when he must act for himself, and when the dearest of friends and the best of counsellors seem sequestered from him. Experience cannot be imparted; it must be bought; and every human creature must pay its price.

Booth travelled to New Orleans and there filled an engagement — the last that he was destined to play — at the St. Charles theatre, ending it on November 19, 1852, with Sir Edward Mortimer and John Lump, in *The Iron Chest* and *The Review*. He then embarked aboard the Mississippi steamboat *Cheneworth*, for Cincinnati. At starting there was rain, and he got wet and caught a cold. That illness he only so far observed as to retire to his cabin and his bed, where he lay, in silence and alone, for more than forty-eight hours, worn with pain and with the struggle of his self-torturing spirit, but, to the last, patient, reticent, firm, and unwilling to be a burden or annoyance to any one. When at last he was visited he was found to be dying. His death occurred on November 30, 1852, in the fifty-seventh year of his age. His body was brought home for burial, and his grave is in Greenmount cemetery

at Baltimore, marked by a monument, erected by Edwin, who devoted to that duty the gains of the first successful engagement that he played after returning to the East.

Much intervened before that return. The California period of Edwin Booth's career — inclusive of a trip to the Sandwich Islands, the Samoan Islands, Tahiti, and Australia, extended from the summer of 1852 to the autumn of 1856. At first, after his father's departure, there was a brief period of waiting. Then he got an engagement with D. W. Waller, to act at Nevada and Grass Valley, playing various parts in various pieces. Waller was the star. During that engagement Booth acted Iago for the first time. It proved an unfortunate venture, attended by bad business, weary travelling, storms, and discomfort, and terminating in disaster. Hemmed in at Grass Valley by a great snow-storm, the wandering players, together with all the other inhabitants of the place, were brought to the verge of starvation. Amid those distresses an adventurous carrier, bursting through the snow, arrived with letters from the outer world, one of which bore to Booth the tidings of his father's death. It came at night. The actor was absent from his lodging, and had to be sought by a comrade, whose face, on finding him, told, before a word was spoken, the sad news of the bereavement. "My father is dead!" cried Edwin. It was his first experience of great trouble, and his sorrow was augmented by regret that he had allowed his father to depart alone, and by anxiety as to his mother's welfare. He was nearly destitute, snowbound in the wilderness, and almost crazed with grief for the loss of a parent whom he idolised. There was

JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH.

Photo by Sarony.

no conveyance out of Grass Valley. The nearest town was Marysville, fifty miles away. The snow lay thick and heavy on the road. In this dilemma he chanced to overhear the talk of a group of men at a street corner, who spoke of their design to walk out of town rather than remain and starve. The men were rough, and their project was perilous, but their plan opened the only road of deliverance, and the actor instantly joined his fortunes with those of the daring strangers. Each contributed what he could to the common purse; a chief was chosen, and the expedition set forth. The journey to Marysville occupied two days and one night. Cold, hungry, and wretched, they reached their journey's end, and scattered to their several destinations. Booth, although penniless, managed to make his way to San Francisco, where he arrived in a forlorn condition. His brother Junius had received a later message from home. Their father's body had been sent to Baltimore and laid in the grave. Their return was not essential. If they saw good fortune in California they would do right to remain there. By that counsel they determined to abide.

Booth now became a member of a dramatic company, under his brother's management, to play utility parts, at the San Francisco hall. Farces and burlesques were given at that place, and in those pieces the ready and versatile player took an active share. One of his hits at that time was made as Dandy Cox, in a negro farce, produced by the Chapman family. Another was his personation of Plume, a local celebrity, whom he reproduced in a farce, and so well reproduced that the "counterfeit presentment" proved both popular and

remunerative. Plume was pleased to signify approval, and to show the sincerity of his satisfaction by sending to the actor his hat, coat, and gaiters. A more important success was made by Booth in Shakespeare's Petruchio, which he then first acted.

Step by step, in that little theatre, he made his upward way. The discipline was irksome, the drudgery various and incessant; but this was valuable experience. One night, for the benefit of a comrade, he acted Richard the Third, and his success was magical. The city rang with his praises. Even the phlegmatic Junius was surprised at that outburst of tragic power, and he straightway advised his brother's appearance in a series of the great characters of English drama. Most of them Booth had studied. Several of them he had seen, as acted by his father, from whom it was his privilege to learn, and to whose genius and example he always expressed a sense of affectionate gratitude. He accepted the opportunity and he proved equal to it. Richard was followed by Sir Giles Overreach, and that by Macbeth, and those impersonations caused a popular excitement unprecedented in the dramatic life of California. Crowded houses applauded him. The generous enthusiasm of the Press encouraged and cheered him. The sympathy of brother actors stimulated him. He became the favourite of the theatre-going public and he made an impression on the stage which was deep, strong, and destined to endure.

Toward the close of that series of classic performances at the San Francisco hall he obtained a benefit, and, mindful of his father's suggestion and of the promise to which it had led, he acted Hamlet — making

his first appearance in that part. It was the crowning success and it brought the crowning honours. Through the lawless strength, diffused effort, and inequality of the personation, thoughtful observers saw the informing power of fine intelligence and the authentic fire of dramatic genius. Much was written about it and about the actor. Thoughtful reviews, contributed to one of the local newspapers, by F. C. Ewer, afterward a prominent clergyman in New York, gave salutary suggestions and useful counsel. His brother Junius was wise and kind in warning him against the possible danger of his mistaking the exuberant force of youth for complete mastery of the art of acting. "You have had a wonderful success for a young man," said that sagacious friend, "but you have much to learn." And that view of the subject Junius proceeded to apply, in his capacity of manager, as soon as the excitement caused by Booth's surprising achievements had subsided, by casting him again for parts in comedy, farce, and burlesque. Three times did the young actor go from star parts to utility, making no protest, but certainly setting the best of examples. It was, he once said to me, "a lesson for crushed tragedians."

A new theatre, the Metropolitan, was presently opened, near the San Francisco hall, with Catherine Sinclair (Mrs. Edwin Forrest — *obiit* June 1891) as manager, and James E. Murdoch as the first star. The new house, handsome, well appointed, and managed by an intellectual and accomplished woman, soon captivated the popular fancy. Public attention was diverted from the old theatre; the business there grew bad; the company dwindled; the place was finally abandoned

to negro minstrelsy; and Booth — after taking service at the Metropolitan for about one year — determined to go to Australia. That was in 1854. The Australian trip, including an episode of professional experience at the Sandwich Islands, the Samoan Islands, and Tahiti, occupied nine months. Booth was accompanied by D. C. Anderson and Laura Keene; and it was arranged that those three were to constitute the nucleus of a company, to act in Sydney, Melbourne, and wherever else the star of adventure might guide them. After embarking in the brig that was to convey them across the Pacific, Booth discovered that the captain's wife, who had been an actress and who was insane, had formed the design of affording professional support to his performances in Australia, and had come on board, with her stage habiliments; likewise that another actress, of "heavy" business, possessed of some repute on the San Francisco stage, had been moved by a similar inspiration in his behalf, and was also present, with the requisite wardrobe. This "concatenation" was comically completed by the arrival of Laura Keene, and the meeting of the three astonished and suspicious tragedy-queens in the cabin. That grotesque incident proved an augury of many more, the trip being composed of ludicrous vicissitudes.

The voyage from San Francisco to Sydney lasted seventy-two days, during twelve of which the brig lay becalmed upon the summer ocean. Arrived at Sydney, Booth made his first appearance as Shylock — acting that part for the first time — and played a successful engagement. Then the party proceeded to Melbourne, where they were less fortunate, and where Booth's busi-

ness relations with Laura Keene were ended. At that port the actor took passage in a vessel bound for the Sandwich Islands. Accompanied by Anderson, John Roe, and a few other players, he landed at Honolulu, hired the only theatre in the town, and remained there two months — producing *Richard the Third*, *The Lady of Lyons*, and other pieces. Roe, who possessed skill in the delineation of female characters, acted Pauline. Most of the dramatic company slept in hammocks rigged in the theatre. Booth himself went about the streets and pasted his posters on the walls — not to save expense, but because he found that the native boys, whom he had employed to do this work, ate the paste (poi-poi) and threw away the playbills. Some prosperity rewarded his enterprise, but not much, and he presently resolved to return to San Francisco. On his arrival there Catherine Sinclair offered him an engagement at the Metropolitan theatre, where he reappeared, playing Benedick, in *Much Ado*. Later, Booth and that actress formed a partnership to travel and act, which was distinguished by one incident of interest — the first production in America of the drama of the *Marble Heart*. Catherine Sinclair was the original Marco, in this country, Booth the original Raphael, and Henry Sedley, son of W. H. Sedley Smith, once a favourite actor on the Boston stage, the original Volage. That novelty, as it then was, met with "acceptance bounteous," and its presentation, which occurred at Sacramento, was the most important event of the dramatic season of 1855 in California.

The partnership soon ended, and Booth started on other wanderings. This time he journeyed from Sacra-

mento into the adjacent mountains, with a strolling manager named Moulton, who had organized a dramatic company and provided a wagon for its transportation, together with a brass band, to make music by the way. Booth travelled on horseback, halting now and then to act, and so making the mountain circuit. The expedition met with intermittent public favour, but it was uniformly attended by one startling incident: each town took fire as soon as Moulton's cavalcade had left it, and so regularly did this lurid phenomenon recur that at last it became the theme of general remark, and Booth was known and designated as The Fiery Star. It was an epithet of ill-omen, but as a warning it was salutary. Ignorant and lonely communities are superstitious and dangerously impulsive. There was no obvious link between the strollers and the fires; but the logic of the mountaineers deduced the one from the other, and travel became unsafe for Moulton's caravan. At Downieville Booth found reason for solicitude as to his personal safety, and deemed it judicious to ride immediately out of town. The discreet manager, having private reasons to dread the sheriff, followed that example. Indeed, he improved upon it — for he ran away, not only from Downieville but from his company. The band ceased to blow, the actors dispersed, the driver of the Moulton wagon seized Booth's horse, as security for money owed to him by the manager, and "the fiery star" seemed to be quenched. He still retained a few trinkets, though, and of those he made the best use. Hardships had to be endured; but these were not new to him, and youth can endure much. Penniless once more, the tragedian drifted back to Sacramento, tired of painful vicissitudes and unrequited effort.

Thoughts of home and longings for cultured ease had now begun to colour his moods and sway his purpose. He wished to return to the East, and it was not long before the wish was gratified. In Sacramento he found friendship, counsel, and practical assistance. Two benefit performances were arranged for him, and both were successful — a result largely due to the zeal of a friend, M. P. Butler, a generous soul, since passed away, who laboured in his cause with devoted assiduity, and aroused and stimulated the theatrical community to give him, at parting, a substantial mark of good-will. A cheering crowd accompanied him to the river-side and saw him embarked. At San Francisco he had another benefit, and once more he exchanged a farewell greeting with the California public. On that occasion, and for the first time, he acted King Lear — using the Tate version, which afterward he discarded. His departure from California occurred in September 1856.

The roughest portion of Booth's professional experience was now past. Other troubles — some of them the bitterest that man can know — were yet to be encountered; but physical hardships and cares of a sordid kind were left behind, and the star of good fortune began to loom, large and bright, above the horizon. Those friends in California who had anticipated prosperity and fame for him in the older States found their anticipations fulfilled. He came upon a play-going community that was more than commonly eager for novelty. He came also with the prestige of a renowned name — sufficient in itself to insure him an immediate and sympathetic welcome. And what he thus attracted he repaid. Those who saw him at that time saw a

young man of extraordinary grace, robust yet refined vigour, and a spirit ardent with the fire of genius. In the form of his acting there were defects, arising partly from lack of culture and partly from lack of attrition with intellectual and refined society; but the actor's gift — the power to imagine and assume states of emotion and phases of character — may exist apart from mental training and conventional deportment; and it was felt that in the soul of Booth's acting there was spontaneous passion, imaginative power, — the nameless beauty which thrills, entices, and ennobles, and which is the inseparable attribute of inspiration.

Booth made his first appearance, after coming to the Atlantic coast, at the Front Street theatre, Baltimore, and from that place he made a rapid tour of the South, playing successful engagements in the chief cities of that region. Washington, Richmond, Charleston, New Orleans, Mobile, and Memphis were among the capitals that opened their arms to receive him, and in all of them he laid a foundation of solid reputation, "whole as the marble, founded as the rock." But the most important of the series of performances by which he endeavoured to revive, in the Atlantic States, the memory and lustre of a great name was given at Boston. The playgoers of that city were remarkable for refinement of taste and severity of judgment, and Booth assured me that he looked forward to his appearance there with trepidation. Should it prove a failure he was determined to retire into the stock. Should it prove a success he would, perhaps, press on to the fulfilment of more ambitious designs than he had yet disclosed. But his belief was

that his success as a star would last only for one or two seasons, and the most that he expected was that he might become a leading actor in a New York theatre.[1] Booth appeared at the Boston theatre April 20, 1857, in the character of Sir Giles Overreach, and was completely victorious. His present biographer was in the audience and may speak from personal knowledge of the actor's triumph. That was the turning-point of his career. It banished self-distrust; it confirmed him in a hopeful estimate of his talents; and it strengthened his resolve to attempt those magnificent enterprises for the advancement of the stage which he afterward pursued with results so valuable to art.

From Boston Booth proceeded to New York. Injudicious and unauthorised announcements had been put forth, in advance of his coming — ostentatious placards, made by an agent, which apprised the public that the mantle of the famous father had fallen upon the son, and that "Richard's himself again." Those ebullitions of misguided enthusiasm caused Booth deep mortification. He had intended to begin with Sir Giles Overreach, but as Richard the Third was promised he appeared in that character. That was at Burton's Metropolitan theatre, May 14, 1857. Ireland, in his copious and valuable *Records of the New-York Stage*, says that Booth played Richard, on that occasion, "with a brilliancy and force that surpassed the warmest expectations of his friends," and that he "gave evidence of the highest order of talent." During that engagement he acted

[1] "The height of my expectation was to become a leading actor in a New York theatre, after my starring tour — which I supposed would last a season or two." — MS. NOTE BY E. B.

Richard the Third, Sir Giles Overreach, Richelieu, Shylock, Lear, Romeo, Hamlet, Claude Melnotte, Sir Edward Mortimer, Petruchio, St. Pierre, The Stranger, Lucius Brutus, and Pescara.

On August 31, 1857, he again appeared at the Metropolitan theatre, and by another series of impersonations increased the multitude of his friendly admirers. After that he was seen in the West and South. In 1858, at the Richmond theatre, he met Miss Mary Devlin, the lady who became his wife. They were betrothed in 1859, and, in New York, on July 7, 1860, they were married;[1] and shortly afterward they sailed for England. That marriage was happy; for his Mary — whom, to the last, he most entirely and devotedly loved — was a gentle, cheerful creature, the incarnation of sunshine, who by the unconscious loveliness of her life seemed born to give happiness and hope. Mary Devlin possessed, in an uncommon degree, the winning charm of seductive, personal grace. Her mind was imaginative, tasteful, sensible, and well cul-

[1] The marriage occurred at the home of Rev. Samuel Osgood, D.D., No. 154 (now No. 118), West 11th street, New York. Dr. Osgood performed the ceremony. The record is in the following words: —

Marriages.

1860, July 7. { EDWIN BOOTH, Philadelphia. MARY DEVLIN, Hudson City.

In presence of: —
J. WILKES BOOTH.
ADAM BADEAU.

The room in which the marriage took place was the clergyman's study. It remains unchanged. In the winter of 1879–80 Booth called at the Osgood house and asked to be permitted to see again the room in which, as he then said, he had "secured his greatest happiness."

MARY DEVLIN BOOTH.

From a painting by Eastman Johnson.

tivated. She was an excellent musician and a pleasing actress. Her brief existence diffused a sweet influence and left a pleasant and tender recollection. She was the daughter of a merchant, of Troy, N. Y., born in that city in 1840, and there she passed her childhood. Later her education was conducted at an institute in New York. Her tutor in music was Mrs. Seguin, once famous, and so worthily associated with English opera, and under that lady's care she was well grounded in the rudiments of that art. Her talent and inclination for the stage were manifested early in life, and in 1854 she made her first public appearance, in Troy. Her successes then were achieved in singing parts, such as Lucy Bertram, in *Guy Mannering*, but she subsequently acquired distinction by the meritorious performance of speaking parts, of a higher grade. On June 22, 1858, she made her first appearance on the New-York stage, acting Juliet, to the Romeo of Charlotte Cushman, at Niblo's Garden. That character she also played, with success, at the Boston theatre. It was a symmetrical personation, true in ideal, and pervaded by natural grace and feeling. After her betrothal to Booth she retired from the stage. She accompanied her husband to England, where they remained till September 1862. Their only child, a daughter, Edwina, now Mrs. Ignatius Grossman, was born at Fulham, London, December 9, 1861. On their return to America they established their home at Dorchester, Massachusetts. The health of Mrs. Booth had become impaired, but she was not thought to be seriously ill when her husband parted from her, to fulfil professional engagements at a distance. They never met again. Her illness suddenly took a dan-

gerous turn; she sank rapidly, and died on February 21, 1863.[1] Her grave is at Mount Auburn, and there — after thirty years — her idolised husband reposes beside her. She was sincerely loved and deeply mourned, and many tributes were paid to her talents and her memory. Excellent paintings, by Eastman Johnson and W. J. Hennessey, preserve the image of her delicate loveliness, and a tender poem by that quaint and gentle genius, T. W. Parsons, commemorates her virtues and utters the deep grief of bereaved hearts. Long after her death, and after his second marriage, her husband placed a memorial window, for her sake, in the Berkeley Memorial church, near "Boothden," at Newport.

Booth's first engagement in London was played at the Haymarket, under the management of J. B. Buckstone, in September 1861. At the suggestion of the

[1] Booth left New York, for Boston, on Saturday morning, February 21, at eight o'clock. He was accompanied by a devoted friend, R. H. Stoddard, the poet. Mrs. Booth died at quarter past eight. Booth was not informed of his bereavement, until his arrival in Boston. He received the news with silent fortitude. Mrs. Booth was buried on February 24, at Mount Auburn, — the Rev. Dr. Huntington reading the service. Only relatives and a few friends were present. Booth's mother attended, as also did his brother, John Wilkes Booth; his brother-in-law, John S. Clarke; William Warren, the comedian; Mrs. S. G. Howe, and T. W. Parsons. The commemorative poem by Parsons contains these lines: —

"She was a maiden for a man to love;
She was a woman for a husband's life —
One that had learned to value far above
The name of Love the sacred name of Wife.

"Her little life-dream, rounded so with sleep,
Had all there is of life — except gray hairs;
Hope, love, trust, passion, and devotion deep,
And that mysterious tie a mother bears."

manager, and contrary to his own desire, he began as Shylock. The public received him kindly but actors and critics were cold. He then acted Sir Giles Overreach and he closed the engagement with Richelieu. In the latter character he aroused enthusiasm, and Buckstone regretted, too late, that he had opposed the tragedian's design of beginning with that part. Booth's first performance of Richelieu was given at Sacramento, California, in July 1856, and thereafter it steadily proved a source of good fortune to the actor and of pleasure to the public. Had he begun with it in London, instead of beginning with a character that English playgoers long ago consecrated to the memory of Edmund Kean, it seems likely that the prosperity of his professional venture would have been increased. From London he went to Liverpool and Manchester, but he did not win much favour in either of those cities. When he appeared at Manchester, — it was in November 1861, — Henry Irving was a member of the stock company that supported him. Several of the great plays were acted, and some of the casts are especially interesting now. The first piece was *Hamlet*, with Booth as the Dane. Irving played Laertes; Calvert, the Ghost; Frederick Everill, Polonius; G. F. Sinclair, the King; Clifford Cooper, Horatio; Frederick Lloyd and Henry Thompson, the two clowns. *Othello* came next, with Booth as the Moor. Irving played Cassio; Calvert, Iago; Lloyd, Roderigo; and Sinclair, Brabantio. With Booth as Iago, Calvert appeared as Othello. The *Merchant of Venice* was presented, with Booth as Shylock, Irving as Bassanio, Sinclair as Antonio, Mrs. Calvert as Portia, Miss Lucy Rushton as

Nerissa, and Miss Jenny Taylor as Jessica. In *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, Booth acting Sir Giles Overreach, Irving played Wellborn; Lloyd, Marrall; and Thompson, Justice Greedy. In *Richard the Third*, Booth acting Gloster, Irving appeared as Buckingham, and Calvert as Richmond. Booth also acted Romeo, with Mrs. Calvert as Juliet, and Petruchio, with Miss Annie Ness as Katherine. The performances, with those fine casts, must have been excellent. But the Civil War was beginning to darken over the American Republic and a lively dislike for "Yankees" was prevalent in England. Booth felt the force of that sentiment. He made, therefore, no further trial of fortune abroad, but, after a trip to Paris, returned home, with his wife and daughter, and resumed his profession in New York.

The Metropolitan theatre, in Broadway, opposite to the end of Bond street had become the Winter Garden — so named by Dion Boucicault. The manager was T. B. Jackson, long since dead. His agent was the Momus of the banquet hall, William Stuart, whose true name was Edmund O'Flaherty, — a plausible and even winning person, but ill-balanced, unstable, capricious, wayward, — a remarkable exemplification of Irish fickleness, sentiment, and humour. That person was destined to exercise some influence upon Booth's fortunes, and to injure him in some quarters by splenetic and censorious tattle. Their first meeting had taken place several years before, at Wallack's theatre — the house in Broadway, near the southwest corner of Broome street, — on the occasion of a performance for the benefit of H. C. Jarrett, when E. L. Davenport acted Othello, Booth acted Iago, and Stuart

managed the enterprise. They now met again, in more immediate business relations. Booth made his first appearance on September 29, 1862, and with that date began an important period of his professional life — a period that witnessed the practical utilisation of the popularity he had previously gained as a tragic actor of the first order. That result was brought about by the conspicuous presentation of the best works in the best style. He appeared in only good parts; he played them under only good circumstances; he attracted and held the public attention as the central figure in a series of magnificent revivals of the standard drama. The Winter Garden episode extended, with brief intermission, from September 29, 1862, to March 23, 1867. During the first engagement Booth acted Hamlet, Othello, Lucius Brutus, Shylock, Iago, Richelieu, Richard the Third, Romeo, Pescara, Sir Edward Mortimer, and Don Cæsar de Bazan. His success was prodigious. The best class of playgoers attended his representations, and the discussion of them in the periodicals of the time was conducted in a sympathetic and thoughtful spirit, — showing that the chords of feeling in the community had been smitten with a strong hand.

At the close of that engagement he made a professional tour of the country. On February 9, 1863, he returned to the Winter Garden and again appeared as Hamlet; but he was ill, alike in mind and body, and unnerved and depressed by a presentiment of evil. The engagement, prematurely broken, lasted only till February 20, and comprised only eleven performances. On that night Booth was summoned to the bedside of his dying wife. He went at once — but he reached

home only to find its light extinguished, its music hushed, and its fair spirit departed.

The effect of that bereavement upon Booth's mind was profound and permanent. Long afterward, referring to the Winter Garden engagement which his wife's death had terminated, he said, "I had not yet got the control of my devil." His infirmity, which he had inherited from his erratic father, — and which, in report, was greatly exaggerated, — was an intermittent craze for drink. He had resisted it, but had not been able wholly to conquer it. From the day when his Mary died, however, he was a changed man. He displayed, from that time, absolute self-command. There were times when he greatly needed stimulant. I have been with him when, at the end of the fourth act of Richelieu, he was almost exhausted, and when he has said that it would be a blessing; but the occasions were very rare, within the last thirty years of his life, when he would allow himself to use it, even as a medicine. He never again was open to reproach on that score. He used tobacco, however, to excess, and in that way he impaired his health. His nervous system was slowly undermined by that narcotic. He could not live without it, and yet it steadily injured him. The illness from which he died gave early intimations of its approach. He grew apathetic and inert. His articulation was sometimes impeded. He suffered from vertigo, which occasionally overtook him when he was acting; and various amiable writers for the Press then charged him with inebriety. There was no ground for that aspersion. He had got the control of his "devil," and he never lost it. Affliction and suffering made him resolute and strong. He awoke then to a

full realisation of the great facts of life and death, and his self-government, from that time onward, was perfect. His humility, gentleness, and patience were intensified. He had learned the great lesson of submission, and throughout the vicissitudes of his subsequent career he was steadfast in endurance, plenteous in kindness, tireless in charity, constant in duty, faith, and hope. The state of his feelings, at that crisis of his life, and the intrinsic loveliness of his spirit, are indicated in a letter which he then addressed to the Rev. Dr. Osgood, and which the kindness of Mrs. Mabel Osgood Wright, daughter of that honoured and lamented clergyman, permits me to print: —

DORCHESTER, March 7, 1863.

REV. SAMUEL OSGOOD:

My Dear Sir, — In acknowledgment of your kind letter of condolence and advice, I can only offer you my poor thanks.

I was not aware, until it was too late, that you were in Boston, or I should have begged of you, who blessed us in the wedding of our hopes, a prayer on that sad day when they all withered: need I tell you how sincerely I regretted your absence?

Two little years have indeed taught me much. I have touched in that brief space the extremes of earthly joy and grief, a joy scarce understood till it was snatched from me; a grief far beyond my poor conception, until He laid His rod upon me. A reality — sterner than ever I imagined — has torn from my eyes the rosy veil through which I looked upon the world.

You have been pleased to mention my art and to express the hope that I may be spared to serve it long and faithfully: if it be His will I bow before it meekly, as I now bear the terrible affliction He has seen fit to lay upon me, but I cannot repress an inward hope that I may soon rejoin her who, next to God, was the object of my devotion.

When I was happy my art was a source of infinite delight and pride to me, because she delighted in my success and encouraged

me in all I did; I had then an incentive to work, to achieve something great. But my ambition is gone with her; it can give me no pleasure to paint a picture of my grief and hold it up as a show for applause again.

My agony will be too intense to render properly those passions of woe, and sufferings which till now I thought required years of study and practice, but which, alas! I have too quickly — too deeply learned.

Her applause was all I valued — gaining it I felt there was something noble in my calling; her criticism was the most severe and just — feeling this I felt also there was something higher to be attained; but now I can only regard my profession as the means of providing for the poor little babe she has left with me; the beauty of my art is gone — it is hateful to me — it has become a trade.

Pardon me for thus trespassing upon your patience, and think only of the grateful feelings your sympathy has awakened in my heart, and of the firmness of my resolve to live for the dear innocent whose goodness shall be my guide to her so deeply loved and mourned.

With sincerest wishes for your health and happiness, believe me,

Your servant,

EDWIN BOOTH.

Booth now relinquished his residence at Dorchester, bought a house in New York, discontinued acting, and went into retirement with his mother — contemplating a long seclusion from public life. As days wore on, however, he began to feel the necessity of occupation. The dreams and plans of his youth came back upon his mind; the wish to "shine in use" rather than to "rust unburnished" woke again and asserted its former power; and at length he determined to improve opportunities which then presented themselves of embarking, with his brother-in-law, John S. Clarke, the famous comedian, — married to Booth's sister Asia, — in two theatrical enterprises of magnitude and importance. One was the purchase of the Walnut Street theatre, Philadelphia;

BOOTH'S HOME AT DORCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS.

the other was the management of the Winter Garden theatre, New York. Both were undertaken, and they at once opened a field for the energetic exercise of great and various ability. In the direction of the Philadelphia house Booth and Clarke were associated from the summer of 1863 till March 1870, when the latter purchased his partner's interest. In the management of the Winter Garden they associated with themselves, at first as an agent, afterwards as a lessee, William Stuart, already mentioned, and by that triumvirate the theatre was conducted. Its first season under its new management began on September 21, 1863, when Booth reappeared as Hamlet. He was welcomed with cordiality, and he played a prosperous engagement — extending to October 17. Towards its close he acted Ruy Blas, for the first time.

Wanderings followed that period of metropolitan effort; but by the ensuing spring those had ended, and on March 28, 1864, he once more claimed the attention of the New-York public, appearing at Niblo's theatre, and winning a triumph, as Bertuccio, in *The Fool's Revenge.* That play, made by Tom Taylor, on the basis of Victor Hugo's *Le Roi S'Amuse* was originally produced in London by Samuel Phelps. An outraged husband and father, blindly pursuing a scheme of vengeance upon his wronger, is made to assist a libertine in the forcible abduction of his own daughter. That father is the Fool and that is his Revenge. He subsequently discovers his mistake, and he suffers a revulsion of feeling and a strong shock of agony. The character makes a deep draft upon imagination and sensibility. Booth's personation of it was superb.

Fierce vitality, sardonic humour, and mad vindictiveness made the embodiment a horrible incarnation of gleeful wickedness and insane rage. Yet through all there ran a golden vein of pathos. At one time the actor seemed a Fury raving in madness — when, under the night sky and in the lonely street, Bertuccio calls down upon his enemy the tortures which have so long burned and seethed in his own bosom. At another time he was as pitiable as Lear in the climax of his awful agony. That was in a scene outside the door of the banquet hall, when the Fool pleads for admittance, to rescue his child. The simulation of glee, through which the father's frantic grief and terror broke at last, in wild and lamentable cries of anguish, was one of the finest things ever done by an actor, and one of the most affecting expositions that Booth ever afforded of the power of his genius. That performance, painful and terrible, won for him much admiration and imparted new views of the originality and versatility of his powers. He was also seen, during the engagement at Niblo's, as Raphael, in *The Marble Heart*, which he then played for the first time in New York — April 18, 1864. On April 16 he had acted Sir Edward Mortimer and Petruchio, for the benefit of the American Sanitary Fair; and for that cause he also joined in a production of *Macbeth*, with Charlotte Cushman as Lady Macbeth. The engagement terminated on April 22, and he returned to the Winter Garden.

The tercentenary of Shakespeare's birthday, April 23, 1864, was celebrated by the production of *Romeo and Juliet*, to increase the fund for erecting a statue of the poet, in Central Park — James H. Hackett playing

Falstaff, at Niblo's Garden, on the same night, in aid of the same cause. Booth continued to act at the Winter Garden till May 14, appearing as Hamlet, Othello, Richelieu, and Richard the Third. A summer of preparation succeeded, with a view to the first of those dramatic pageants by which the tragedian did so much to delight and instruct the community, to dignify the American stage, and to gild his name with honour. *Hamlet* was brought out on November 26, 1864, and it kept the stage till March 24, 1865 — greeted at the outset with enthusiasm, and sustained till the last by a patient public interest. That period saw accomplished for *Hamlet* a run of one hundred nights. The scenery, devised with scholarship and taste, presented a series of impressive pictures. The view of the moonlit battlements of Elsinore was exceedingly beautiful. A cold wind of death seemed to blow around the dusky, sombre fortress, as the dread ghost came gliding in before the stricken gaze of the terrified midnight watchers. Booth played Hamlet with lofty purity of spirit. Many writers recorded its merits and celebrated its excellence — discussing it with thoughtful care and deep sympathy. Seldom has the work of an actor concentrated upon itself in an equal degree the attention of judicious intellect and the generous enthusiasm of the people.

A special performance of *Julius Cæsar*, given at the Winter Garden on November 25, 1864, for the benefit of the fund for the erection of the Shakespeare statue in Central Park, attracted much attention, and, by those who saw it, has not been forgotten. The three brothers appeared together, and their aged mother observed them from a stage box. Brutus was acted by

Edwin Booth, Cassius by Junius Booth, and Marc Antony by John Wilkes Booth. The official advertisement of that alliance, and of the production of *Hamlet* for its memorable run of one hundred performances, is a curiosity, and as such it is here preserved: —

WINTER GARDEN.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

WINTER GARDEN, Nov. 25, 1864.

Mr. Stuart has pleasure in announcing that, owing to the generous zeal and untiring devotion of

MR. EDWIN BOOTH,

a performance will be given at this theatre on

FRIDAY EVENING, Nov. 25,

(Mr. J. S. Clarke having kindly ceded this evening for the occasion) for the benefit of the fund to raise a statue to Shakespeare in the Central Park, being the second benefit given for this object at the Winter Garden. The evening will be made memorable by the appearance in the same piece of the three sons of the great Booth,

JUNIUS BRUTUS,
EDWIN
AND
JOHN WILKES,

Filii Patri digno digniores,

who have come forward with cheerful alacrity to do honour to the immortal bard from whose works the genius of their father caught its inspiration, and of many of whose greatest creations he was the best and noblest illustrator the stage has ever seen.

The play selected for the occasion is the tragedy of

JULIUS CÆSAR,

JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH appearing as CASSIUS,
EDWIN BOOTH as BRUTUS,
and JOHN WILKES BOOTH as MARC ANTONY.

Julius Cæsar (first appearance).....Mr. E. Varrey
Casca (first appearance).....Mr. Charles Kemble Mason
Octavius Cæsar.....Mr. C. Walcot, jr.
Trebonius.....Mr. C. R. Chester
Decius.....Mr. J. W. Burgess
Metellus.....Mr. T. S. Cline
Lucius.....Miss Fanny Prestige
First Plebeian.....Mr. E. Eberle
Second Plebeian.....Mr. O. S. Fawcett
Portia.....Mrs. F. S. Chanfrau
Calphurnia.....Mrs. C. Walcot, jr.

The piece will be presented under the stage direction of Mr. J. G. Hanley. The proceeds will be handed to the Treasurer of the Shakespeare Statue Fund. The doors will be open at 7½, and the performance will commence at 8.

The prices of admission to Dress-Circle and Parquette will be $1.50; to the Family Circle, which has been recently handsomely fitted up, $1. A few extra orchestra chairs have been added, which will be disposed of at the Box-Office this morning at $5 each.

Mr. Stuart trusts that those who have paid or may pay a large price for seats will remember that, in addition to the value they receive in intellectual enjoyment, they are contributing to a great national work and not to the personal advantage of any individual.

EXTRA ANNOUNCEMENT.

SATURDAY, Nov. 26,

OPENING NIGHT

of the engagement of

EDWIN BOOTH.

Mr. Stuart begs to announce, that on SATURDAY, Nov. 26, Mr. EDWIN BOOTH will make his first regular appearance in the play of

HAMLET.

The piece will be placed on the stage under the immediate direction of Mr. Booth, by Mr. J. G. Hanley, stage manager, in a style, it is hoped, combining splendour of production with strict historical correctness. The play has been in active preparation for the last three months, and no expense or effort has been spared in the endeavour by a more strictly pictorial arrangement of the ordinary stage resources, and by the fidelity, appro-

priateness and superior execution of the several means of scenic illusion, to carry out the spirit of the play into the most minute details, and thus advance the drama as a branch of national literature and art.

The scenery, music, costumes, properties and machinery will be entirely new, and, to give a perfect completeness to the cast, engagements have been made with

MRS. J. W. WALLACK, jr.,

one of the most gifted actresses that ever graced the stage;

MR. EDWIN VARREY,

MR. CHARLES KEMBLE MASON,

and the eminent comedian

MR. THOMAS PLACIDE:

All of whom will make their first regular appearance for many years on the New York stage, on this occasion.

Seats may now be procured for Saturday and every evening.

Booth's Hamlet, withdrawn from the Winter Garden on March 24, 1865, was transferred to the Boston theatre, and at that house Booth was acting when, on April 14, a sudden calamity overwhelmed and almost ruined him. The people of America and the heart of Christendom suffered in it a terrible shock and bitter bereavement. Consternation, grief, and rage swept over the land. The excitement of that hour was wild and indiscriminate, and the relatives of the maniac who took the life of President Lincoln suffered under the odium of unjust suspicion and popular resentment. The knowledge that a brother was thus steeped in guilt and ignominy was a heavy weight of woe to Edwin Booth. Immediate and superficial troubles incident to the hideous experience could be endured and surmounted; but the sense of the crime itself, as done in its awful wickedness and madness by one of his own kin, imposed upon his sensitive, conscientious nature an unspeakable anguish. For a time his hard-earned repu-

tation, the honour of his name, and the station and repute of his family seemed destroyed. Life in the present was a blank, and beyond the present a waste of misery stretched into the future. He left the stage and buried himself in obscurity, and from that retirement he would never have emerged but for the stern necessity of meeting obligations incurred long before, and only now to be met by his active resumption of professional industry. The softening influence of public sympathy, which presently began to set toward him in a strong tide of interest, made the duty of a reappearance more practicable and more tolerable than it would otherwise have been. Had there not existed, however, an imperative necessity that Booth should return to the stage he would never have acted again. He reappeared, January 3, 1866, at the Winter Garden, as Hamlet.[1] A great crowd welcomed him, and with such a welcome as would have lightened the saddest heart. Nine cheers hailed him, upon his first appearance. The spectators rose. Flowers were showered upon the stage. Affectionate good-will beamed in every face and gave assurance, deep and strong, that the generous public had no intention of casting upon an innocent man the burden and blight of a brother's guilt. Wherever he appeared, after that momentous return to the stage, he found a cordial greeting and respectful sympathy; and so, little by little, he got back into the old way, and his professional career resumed its flow in the old channel.

[1] On that night the cast of *Hamlet* included Charles Kemble Mason as the King, Mrs. Wilkins as the Queen, J. H. Taylor as the Ghost, Charles Barron as Laertes, W. A. Donaldson as Horatio, John Dyott as Polonius, Effie Germon as Ophelia, and W. S. Andrews as the First Grave-digger.

The second of those sumptuous revivals of the legitimate drama with which the name of Edwin Booth is inseparably associated was made after his return to the stage in 1866. Preparations for it had been begun, prior to the disaster which led to his retirement. The play was *Richelieu*, and it was brought forward on February 1. The scenery constituted a pageant of extraordinary splendour. One picture, a gem of imaginative composition, represented an apartment in the Cardinal's palace at Ruelle. The perspective was composed of arches. A flood of pale moonlight streamed in through a lofty Gothic window, and faintly illumined the rich, quaint, sombre furniture. On a carved table stood a candelabrum, with flaring lights. That was the scene in which the frail but fiery priest, — awaiting the arrival of the packet that will place the conspirators in his grasp, — pores upon a book and reads the sage counsel of the "sober moralist." Booth's Richelieu, always a majestic figure, showed with singular distinctness and beauty amid those poetic accessories. In magnificence and elaboration the effect of that revival was afterward surpassed, in the production of *Richelieu* at Booth's theatre in 1871; but the plan of it, matured and tried, was followed as a model. It was in this presentment of *Richelieu* that the expedient was first adopted of putting the court of Louis the Thirteenth into mourning, in act fifth, for the supposed death of the Cardinal. Booth's personation of Richelieu was, by many acute observers, accounted his best work. Caldwell, of New Orleans, the veteran manager, whose great experience and sagacity made him a competent judge, singled out that performance as the best, at an early day in the

actor's career, and he advised Booth always to give it when appearing for the first time in any place. The character assimilated, at many points, with Booth's temperament. Appearing as the soldier-priest, he never failed to touch the popular heart.

The drama of *Richelieu* embodies a story of enthralling interest, presents clearly defined characters, in natural relations to each other, and is inspired by an incessant dramatic movement, that increases in speed and rises in force, reaching an electrical climax and a beautiful culmination. It is adequately provided with situations that excite the mind and touch the heart. Its spirit is sympathetic with virtue and gentleness, and thus it captivates the amiable instincts of human nature. It is imaginative; it idealises reality, and does not pretend to present character and experience in the garb of fact. Considered as an ideal creation it is without serious defect. Its chief blemish is one of literary art. There is some tinsel in the lines. Little faults, however, disappear in the presence of great merits. *Richelieu* constantly affords pleasure by celebrating the victory of goodness over evil, under interesting and picturesque circumstances; and to have written a drama that accomplishes the distinct result of making its spectator happier is to have deserved gratitude.

Richelieu was not the noble spirit in actual life that he is in the fiction. The dramatist has depicted him as just, wise, kind, gentle, tolerant of weakness, sympathetic with goodness, sensitive to poetic influence, and inimical only to tyranny and wrong. The ignoble side of his nature is his craft; but it is the craft of a philosopher and not of a traitor. If he uses indirection

it is such indirection as a deep knowledge of human nature and affairs has taught him to be essential in the government of mankind. He never resorts to the skin of the fox until he has exhausted the skin of the lion. In the drama he is shown to be engaged upon comparatively small matters — the protection of lovers and the defeat of a political intrigue; but he is presented as a man of potent intellect and fine sensibility. He is seen to have strong character and stately individuality, in spite of his vanities and of the littleness of the designs amid which he moves. The charm of the character grows out of this relation. It is the embodiment of virtuous power, supreme as the protector of innocent weakness. Booth grasped that ideal, and made it the vital spirit of his personation. His thoughtful, spiritual face and his slender, priest-like figure — made up with the concomitants of age and clothed in correct ecclesiastical garments — combined in a perfect presentment of the fiery soul in the gaunt and fragile body. The physical realisation had grown out of a combination of intuitions and crystallised upon a distinct ideal. Form is a trivial thing unless it be eloquent with spirit. That eloquence pervaded and illumined Booth's Richelieu. Seeing the aged priest and hearing his voice, the listener instinctively comprehended a noble old man, in whom the affections lived an immortal life, who would be true as steel to all that is good and pure, who wore with authentic right the imperial garb of power, and who must inevitably conquer. To assume that identity, to preserve it, to show prosaic phases of that nature and yet to retain the poetic individuality, was greatly to succeed in the acting of Richelieu. Booth stood alone in that character.

With the first days of 1867 came the maturity of another professional enterprise in which Booth had laboured with zeal, and the result of which was seen in the sumptuous presentation of *The Merchant of Venice*, made on January 28, that year. The beautiful comedy was brought forward in a beautiful dress. The scenes were painted from sketches made by Leutze. The chief pictures showed the Rialto, the Church of San Giovanni, the Place of St. Mark, a hall in Portia's house, and the Venetian Senate chamber. Upon the walls of the senate hung copies of paintings by Tintoretto. The garden scene reflected the sweet sentiment and delicious languor of a summer landscape. Booth acted Shylock — presenting the Jew as an exponent of personal hatred and revenge, yet also, to some extent, as an embodied protest against cruel wrongs inflicted by a powerful oppressor upon an outlawed nation. To Shylock, as a usurer and a hater, it would be impossible to render more adequate justice than was done in Booth's performance. He placed the chief emphasis upon the personal rancour and malignant hatred that is cherished by the Jew against his mercantile enemy. His Shylock hated Antonio because he was a Christian; but hated him more as the practical and influential foe of usury. The zeal of the religious fanatic and the antagonism of a persecuted race, deeply resentful of deadly injuries, were indicated; but Booth's Shylock was not so much a type of "our sacred nation," pursuing a purpose of righteous retribution, as he was an image of individual malignity and of the implacable intention of personal revenge. Booth, however, was an actor whose feelings often spontaneously illumined his acting and transcended his

mental purpose. His Shylock looked like the authentic vicegerent of the Hebrew Deity, and seemed to be avenging the concentrated wrongs of ages. In the street scene, where Shylock's passion is completely liberated, Booth was incomparably grand.

During that engagement, on January 22, 1867, Booth received the Hamlet Medal, — an offering indicative of appreciation and respect, from many citizens of New York. The presentation was made at the close of a performance of *Hamlet*, and in the presence of a great audience. The stage was set to represent a drawing-room, and, entering that room, the presentation committee met Booth, in the dress of Hamlet, — the united bands of several theatres playing, meanwhile, the Danish National Hymn. The committee comprised Honourable John T. Hoffman, then Governor of New York, Major-General Robert Anderson, William Fullerton, George Bancroft, Charles A. Daly, Charles A. Dana, J. J. Crane, M.D., Professor R. O. Doremus, Professor Louis Agassiz, Oscar Coles, F. Barker, M.D., George William Curtis, W. H. Appleton, C. E. Detmold, R. W. Weston, Bayard Taylor, Henry Peters Gray, S. L. M. Barlow, George G. Barnard, John R. Brady, W. T. Blodgett, Launt Thompson, W. H. Beard, T. LeClear, J. Q. Ward, J. B. Murray, Jervis McEntee, A. Bierstadt, J. E. Russell, Thomas Ward, S. R. Gifford, W. O. Stone, H. T. Tuckerman, W. J. Hennessey, Richard O'Gorman, H. P. Delafield, and A. Oakey Hall. Most of those persons are now dead.

Judge Fullerton delivered an address, in which he said:

"Mr. Booth: You have won a position in your profession such as few men have attained. The representation of Hamlet for one

hundred consecutive nights is an exploit unrecorded in the annals of the stage until you accomplished it, and is worthy of commemoration. But it is not alone your success as an actor that has prompted this demonstration. You have won alike the applause and the respect of your fellow-men; and a numerous body of your friends and admirers desire to offer to you a token of their appreciation of your genius as an actor and of their respect for you as a man. Intrinsically this medal is of little worth; but as a token of the regard of your fellow-citizens it possesses a significance more valuable than the gold of which it is composed or the artistic skill which has adorned it. It was thought proper that this presentation should take place on the occasion of the play of *Hamlet*, with which your name will ever be associated; but the choice of time and place for this ceremony intends a recognition of your life-long efforts to raise the standard of the drama, and to cheer you in your future endeavours. I beg you to accept this gift; and I would express the universal wish that you may win new triumphs in a profession which your virtues have elevated and your talents adorned."

The Hamlet Medal is a gold oval encircled with a gold serpent. In the centre is a head of Booth as Hamlet. At the top is the Danish crown, from which two wreaths are pendent, of laurel and myrtle. The pin to which the medal is attached bears, in the centre, a head of Shakespeare, and on either side are heads emblematic of comedy and tragedy. The motto is "Palmam qui meruit ferat," and the inscription is: "To Edwin Booth: In commemoration of the unprecedented run of *Hamlet*, as enacted by him in New-York city for one hundred nights."[1]

[1] "Stuart, during rehearsals, was confident that *Hamlet* would run six months. Afterwards he gave it eight weeks; and at length he agreed with me that if we got four weeks out of it we should be satisfied. The one-hundred night run was certainly due to Stuart, and the medal presented to me should have been given to him — for the run of the play. I was heartily sick and wearied of the monotonous work, and several times

The hour of doom for the Winter Garden theatre was now at hand. By way of giving zest to the close of his engagements, it had been Booth's custom to dedicate the final week in each of them to that variety which the public usually approves. The custom was again observed. The last week of this engagement, in 1867, which was also the last in the record of the theatre, began on March 18. Booth played, on four successive nights, Pescara, Hamlet, Othello, and Sir Giles, and on the fifth he appeared as Lucius Brutus. That was the night of March 22. Fire is used in one scene of Payne's tragedy, and that is thought to have been the cause of the disaster that followed. Toward morning, March 23, flames burst forth underneath the stage, and thence spread so swiftly, and raged with such fury, that all efforts to save property were baffled, and persons in the building had difficulty in saving their lives. In a few hours the theatre was a ruin. With it perished the fine scenery that had been provided for *Hamlet*, *Richelieu*, and *The Merchant of Venice;* Booth's personal wardrobe, including several articles of stage-dress that had been worn by his father; a large and rich collection of stage dresses; a mass of theatrical furniture; valuable clothes and jewels owned by members of the dramatic company; a quantity of costly armour; a considerable library, inclusive of several important manuscripts; and an interesting gallery of theatrical portraits. Betterton,

during it suggested a change of bill, for I felt that the incessant repetition was seriously affecting my acting, as at that time I was unused to such a thing. But Stuart, wild with his (!) wonderful success, would exclaim, 'No, not at all, my dear boy! Keep it up, keep it up! If it goes a year, keep it up!' And so we kept it up." — MS. NOTE BY E. B., 1874.

Garrick, Foote, Kean, Kemble, Young, Mrs. Siddons, Miss O'Neill, the elder Mathews, the elder Booth, Macready, with many more of old and honourable renown, looked down from the walls of the guest-room, and presented the storied past to the homage of the admiring present. Clarke had sold his interest in the theatre to Booth, for $10,000, just prior to the disaster, and those losses fell chiefly upon the tragedian, striking his gained success out of his grasp, setting him back in the current of enterprise, and making triumphs that before had been close at hand conditional now on years of added toil. That he possessed the public sympathy, however, was, in some sense, comfortable encouragement, for it implied that in any project he might attempt he could depend on the public support. Indications of that sympathy were abundant. It was seen in prosperous performances, for the benefit of sufferers by the fire, and it was seen in assurances of aid from private friends, toward erecting a new theatre.

The loss of the Winter Garden was the loss, not alone of sumptuous stage embellishments, but of a place that garnered up bright recollections of a memorable past and fair promises and high hopes of the dramatic future. There sounded the heavenly voice of Jenny Lind. There glided the mystical figure of Rachel. There the quaint visage and the mellow tones of Burton gladdened all hearts to laughter or saddened them to tears. There Agnes Robertson played, in the prime of her touching and winning sweetness. Blake acted there —next to Burton, the most humorous man of his generation. There the genius of Jefferson cast its spell over many a heart. There Brougham gave delight, in the full

celebrity of his sparkling talent. Kate Bateman there began the mature part of her dramatic career, in association with Edwin Adams, at his best of manly beauty and auspicious endeavour. The piquant and dazzling Cubas danced there, and incarnated the poetry of Spain. On that stage the rare humour and the polished skill of John S. Clarke gained critical and popular applause. There the public heart was captured by the extraordinary charm of Matilda Heron. There were seen and enjoyed the intellectual and powerful performances of Charlotte Cushman, E. L. Davenport, and J. W. Wallack, Jr. There, finally, Edwin Booth accomplished his splendid revivals, and gave his hundred repetitions of *Hamlet*. It is natural that such a theatre should have been affectionately prized, and that its loss should have been deeply deplored. The friends of the drama always found that Booth's management of the Winter Garden was impelled by an ambitious and honourable spirit, and that deep devotion to dramatic art animated and controlled its career.[1]

The Winter Garden was destroyed on March 23, 1867. The corner-stone of Booth's theatre was laid on April 8, 1868, and the first performance in the new house occurred on February 3, 1869. The project for the new theatre was started by Booth, shortly after the loss of the old one, and he presently entered into a partnership with Richard A. Robertson, of Boston, (*obiit* 1891), for the establishment of Booth's Theatre. In

[1] "I thought of framing all the plays I acted, particularly Shakespeare's, appropriately, without going so far beyond the reach of public appreciation as Charles Kean did, — but to emulate him to the extent of my ability." — MS. NOTE BY E. B., 1874.

the spring of 1867, J. H. Magonigle,[1] their representative — afterward the business manager of the theatre — selected and purchased land on the southeast corner of Twenty-third street and Sixth avenue, New York. The work was begun on July 1, in the same year. Several houses that stood upon the land had to be removed, and when that was done a solid stone ledge, which was unexpectedly found beneath them, had to be blasted out. But the labour was prosecuted with energy, so that by April, 8, 1868, the corner-stone of the new theatre could be laid. It was a blustering day, and only a few persons were present to witness the ceremony. James H. Hackett — remembered as a fine representative of Falstaff, and as a devout student of Shakespeare — performed the official acts and delivered an address. Judge

[1] Magonigle, who married the sister of the first Mrs. Booth, was a devoted friend to Edwin Booth, and stood by him, with tireless devotion and affectionate fidelity, to the last moment of his life. In the management of Booth's theatre he was zealous, conscientious, energetic, and prudent. The esteem in which he was held found expression in many ways. One incident may speak for all. On the eve of the New Year, 1871, after the performance, a deputation, headed by the stage manager, D. W. Waller, waited upon Magonigle, and presented to him a beautiful silver vase, suitably inscribed, as a testimonial of respect and friendship, from the heads of departments in the theatre. A presentation speech was made by Waller, in these words: —

Mr. Magonigle: I have been requested by a few of your friends, the attachés of Booth's theatre, to convey to you this trifling testimonial, as a slight mark of the respect and esteem in which you are held, as a courteous gentleman and as the estimable business manager of Booth's theatre. Long may you preside over us, in that honourable position, which you so nobly fill. Let me assure you that you have the cordial wishes of all, for your welfare and happiness. We pray your acceptance of this slight gift, and, at the same time, wish you and your dear family a very happy New Year.

C. P. Daly spoke also, and, tempering grave thoughts with refined pleasantry, said that the drama was cradled in a booth, and by a Booth it would be perpetuated. Then, with masonic observances, the corner-stone was lowered into its place.

Booth's theatre was made of granite. The front of the structure, in Twenty-third street, was one hundred and eighty-four feet in length — the theatre front measuring one hundred and fifty feet. The other thirty-four feet was the width of a wing of the main building, abutting on its west end, with a frontage of seventy-six feet in Sixth avenue. This wing was devoted to shops, studios, and miscellaneous rooms. The theatre was one hundred feet deep, from north to south, and one hundred and twenty feet in height. The main entrance was in Twenty-third street, but there was another door in Sixth avenue. In the north front was a great door to the stage, corresponding in size and style with the main entrance to the auditorium. Between these were three smaller doors, used as means of exit. Three large panels surmounted those doors, made to contain sculpture. All the doors were arched. Higher, and placed equidistant along the front of the theatre, were three large niches, with Ionic pillars, to contain statues. There were four large windows level with those alcoves. Above was a beautiful cornice, and above that was a mansard roof, surmounted by three short towers. In each tower was an oval window. A flagstaff rose from the centre of the flat roof. The summit of each tower was girdled by an ornamental iron trellis, and the lightning-rods which trailed over the towers and roof were adorned with gilded stars and crescents. Entering at the prin-

BOOTH'S THEATRE.

cipal door the visitor stood in a commodious vestibule, paved with Italian marble tiles and lined with Italian marble cement — the ceiling being frescoed. The vestibule extended in a semi-circle along the rear of the auditorium, to which entrance was afforded by three arched doors. The lower floor of the theatre comprised the divisions of parquet and orchestra. A spacious stone staircase, at the south end of the vestibule, led to the balcony. Midway on the staircase rested Gould's noble bust of the elder Booth. Above the balcony was a second gallery, and above that the amphitheatre, reached by a stone staircase from the Sixth avenue entrance. There were three proscenium boxes on each side of the stage, and the house contained seats for seventeen hundred and fifty persons, and standing room for three hundred more. In shape the auditorium followed the horseshoe model. From every part of the theatre the stage could be distinctly seen. Bright frescos shone upon the ceilings. A chandelier depended from the centre of the roof, and all the gas-jets in the building were ignited by electricity. Marble pillars, adorned with statues, arose on either side of the boxes. In the centre of the proscenium arch stood a statue of Shakespeare, the work of Signor G. Turini, an Italian artist, representing the poet meditating and in act to write. Other statues and emblematic devices surrounded that figure, and completed the decoration of the arch. There was a neatly designed pit for the band, sunk below the front of the stage, and below the level of the main floor. Sitting in the amphitheatre the spectator could contemplate, upon the wall above the proscenium arch, portrait busts of Garrick,

Talma, Edmund Kean, George Frederick Cooke, and Betterton. Those were in white ovals, relieved against a dark background. Overhead, in an ascending perspective, was an elaborate painting of Apollo, the Muses and the Graces. On the walls immediately beneath the ceiling were painted various symbolic figures and devices. One panel represented Venus in her chariot. Another depicted the march of Cupid. On the right were figures of Lear and Hamlet; on the left, figures of Othello and Macbeth; while above the proscenium arch, and under the statue of Shakespeare, was painted the Shakespeare coat-of-arms. Those decorations, following the style of Raphael, were planned and furnished by Signor G. G. Gariboldi; the paintings were chiefly from the hand of Signor C. Brumidi. The stage was large and well proportioned. The distance from the footlights to the rear wall was fifty-five feet, and the arch was seventy-six feet wide. Beneath was a pit, thirty-two feet deep, blasted out of the solid rock. That useful chasm was paved with brick. A scene could be sunk into it, out of sight. On the stage, as in every other part of the theatre, double floors were laid, and were secured by screws. In each of the rear corners of the stage was a spiral staircase, leading to the four fly galleries, two on each side, up beneath the roof. The flats were raised and lowered by hydraulic rams, under the stage.[1] At the south side of the

[1] Long afterward, in a private letter, about the Madison Square theatre, with its double stage, — the invention of Steele Mackaye, — Booth glanced at the subject of stage mechanism, as follows: —

"It certainly is the perfection of a comedy theatre. It is beautiful in every detail. I hope, with all my heart, that Mr. Mackaye will be amply

stage was the scene-room, stocked with scenery. Above this was the paint-room, fifty-seven feet by sixteen feet, in which a flat thirty feet high could be stretched and painted. At the south side of the theatre were five stories of rooms, approached by a convenient staircase, including the greenroom, a fireproof room for the wardrobe of the theatre, the star apartments, and about thirty dressing-rooms, comfortably appointed. The greenroom was a parlour, on the second floor, the walls of which were adorned with theatrical engravings. From the vaults beneath the stage ran passages leading into the vaults beneath the auditorium and also into those beneath the sidewalks. Here was seen the foundation, of solid rock. Here were the supports — stone pillars nearly three feet square. The front wall was nearly five feet thick, and the other walls upward of two feet. Under the sidewalk in Twenty-third street was the carpenters' shop of the theatre, in a large, dry vault, together with the boiler-room, in which were two large boilers, to supply steam for an engine, and for hot-air pipes by which the theatre was heated. There were tanks of water at the top of the building. Those details indicate the solidity and beauty of Booth's theatre.

rewarded for the great improvement he has made in theatrical decoration and mechanism. As far as it will go, it is a wonderful advance. I don't see why the same method should not be applied to other than the 'shiftless' scenes of comedies. By raising and lowering the stages a better effect in changing scenes would be reached than was wrought in the old way. At my (former) theatre the rising and sinking scenes often had a good effect, and were applauded, especially when the two movements occurred simultaneously, as was several times the case in *Hamlet*. If this plan could be successfully pursued on a larger scale — which is yet a question — the old split-scene style should be abandoned, in every case where depth can be obtained."

The new house was finished in January 1869. Booth, in the meantime, had been acting in other cities, and in the autumn of 1867, at Chicago, he had been betrothed to Mary F. McVicker,[1] who presently became his wife. Mary F. McVicker was born, in the West, in 1849. Her family name was Runnion. Her mother, a widow, became the wife of Mr. J. H. McVicker, for many years the leader of theatrical management in Chicago, and the child took the name of her stepfather. At an early age she evinced unusual talent for music, and in that art she was carefully educated. When only nine years old she sang in concerts with Signor Brignoli, and she was then considered a remarkable type of precocious talent. She also appeared on the dramatic stage, in juvenile parts, — such as Little Eva, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* Booth saw her, for the first time, about 1858. Seeing her now, after a lapse of nine years, he found her polished by education, intelligent, vivacious, and endowed with both the sense and the faculty of humour. The effect of her quaint and gleeful spirit upon a reticent, introspective, pensive, melancholy nature was that of cheer and hope. At McVicker's theatre, in 1867, she acted Ophelia to Booth's Hamlet, and there and elsewhere, subsequently,

[1] "A new life began to dawn upon me, in the midst of these distracting and displeasing business matters, and my mind was far too busy with the future to feel much interest in the present. In fact, everything connected with the theatre became hateful to me, and I lived a sort of troubled dream-life, perplexed in mind and weary in body, thoroughly disgusted with my 'hobby,' and altogether indifferent as to the result. I let things go, . . . and gave myself up entirely to the contemplation of what was to be of greater import, and far more real, than theatre, or acting, or fame, or dollars." — MS. NOTE BY E. B., 1876

she co-operated with him in chief female characters. Her first appearance in New York was made on the opening night of Booth's theatre, February 3, 1869, when she appeared as Juliet, to Booth's Romeo. On April 12 she played Desdemona, to Booth's Othello, and in that character, on May 29, she took her farewell of the stage. After that date she never acted again. Edwin Booth and Mary McVicker were married on June 7, 1869, at Long Branch, New Jersey, where for a time they resided.[1] One child, a boy, was born to them, on July 4, 1870, but he lived only a few hours. Their married life extended over a period of twelve years. Mrs. Booth died, in New York, on November 13, 1881, in the thirty-second year of her age, and was buried in Chicago. Of that lady it may be said she was remarkable for practical administrative ability in the affairs of business and social life, rather than for conspicuous talent in acting. She possessed neither the figure, the countenance, the voice, nor the personal charm that are essential for great success upon the stage, and her acting, although intelligent, was devoid of both tenderness and power. She acted all along the range, from Lady Macbeth to Ophelia. Her courage was audacious; her ambition boundless; and the fiery energy of her spirit kept her in restless activity, and ultimately consumed her life. As an actress she did not reach the height to which she had aimed, and her mind never

[1] *Married.* BOOTH-MCVICKER. — On Monday, June 7 (1869) at the residence of the bride's parents, at Long Branch, N. J., Mr. Edwin Booth to Miss Mary McVicker. The bride's grandfather, Rev. B. F. Myers, of the California Conference, was the officiating clergyman on the occasion. Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Adams were present. — *Newspaper of the Time.*

submitted to that disappointment. Her best effort on the stage was Desdemona, — a performance that had sweetness, feeling, and a touch of heroism. Her singing of the Willow Song was an exquisite bit of plaintive melody and forlorn pathos. Her thoughts on dramatic subjects were marked by a good power of discrimination and by practical sense. Reared in a theatre, and long associated with theatrical persons and affairs, she had a clear and positive knowledge of the stage, and thus she could and did render valuable assistance to her husband, in his professional life. In a conversation with me, she once expressed the intention of writing a descriptive analysis of each of Booth's impersonations, and during a period of years she made copious and minute notes, night after night, of all the readings and business used by him, and often of his remarks on the various characters he had assumed. That work she designed should be copiously illustrated, and had her purpose been fulfilled the literature of the theatre would have gained a treasure. The most pleasing of her faculties was humour. She had a keen sense of the comic and the ridiculous, and her felicitous language and animated manner, when describing eccentric character or humorous incident and conduct, were excessively droll. Had she chosen to play Irish girls, in farces, she would have succeeded. She was of slight figure, low stature, and dusky aspect. She had an infantile countenance, small features, dark hair, and gray eyes, and her movements were quick and nervous. She suffered much from ill health. The mental disturbance, which became sadly obvious in her last days, early made itself manifest to her husband, who watched

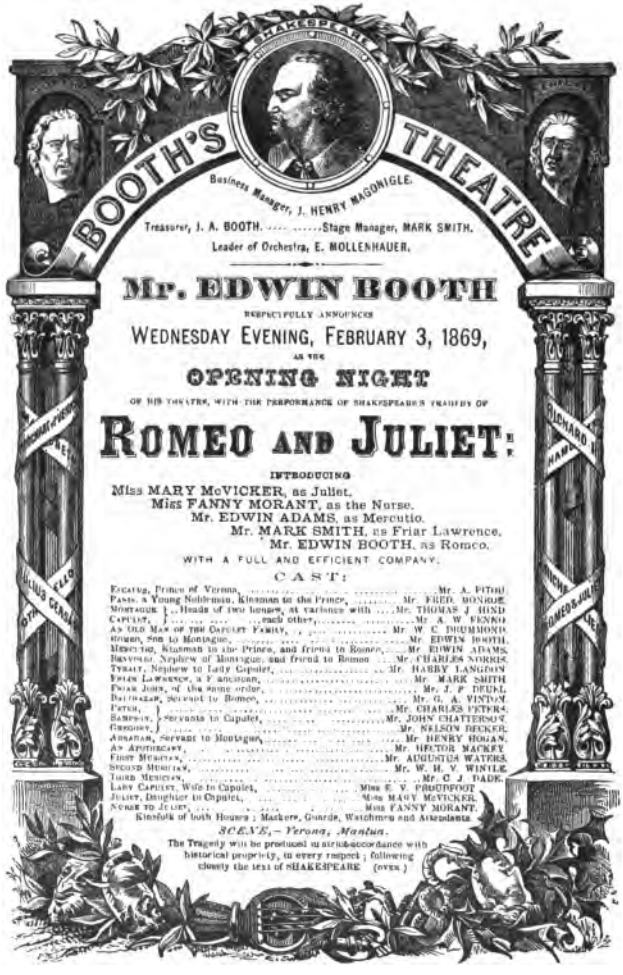
and tended her with patient devotion throughout the vicissitudes of painful and sorrowful decay. She was obviously ill in June 1880, when she went with Booth to England, and while abroad she had the attendance of excellent physicians, and everything was done for her that skill could compass or affectionate care provide. After her return home her malady took such a form that Booth was compelled to keep out of her presence, — although his practical care of her never ceased. That distressing state of domestic affairs led to the publication of many slanders against him, as obnoxious to truth as they were coward-like and brutal. In his affliction — thus deeply embittered by the malice of inveterate enmity — he had the sympathy of all right-minded persons; and at all times he had the consciousness of duty thoroughly, honourably, and tenderly fulfilled, in the most delicate relation of life, and under circumstances calculated to shake the strongest spirit.

Human creatures, at their best, excited by an intellectual impulse and congregated amid surroundings worthy of a high mood, present a grand spectacle. Such a spectacle was presented at Booth's theatre on its opening night. The day had been one of snow and rain, and the evening was chill and dreary. Yet, in every part of it, the new theatre was crowded with a brilliant company. Glancing over the varied and animated throng, you saw many a face that study had paled and thought exalted. Grave judges were there, and workers in the fields of literature, and patient, toiling votaries of science, and artists from their land of dreams. The eyes of beauty, too, shone there with an unwonted lustre, bespeaking at its heart the influence

of unwonted emotion. It was an audience that would have honoured any occasion in the world, and its presence gave to that one a grateful charm of intellect and refinement. Appropriate music was performed by Edward Mollenhauer and his band, and then, responding to the public call, Booth came forward and spoke as follows: —

"Before the curtain rises on our play, let me bid you a welcome, warm as heart can make it, to my new theatre. It has long been my desire to build a theatre that might be regarded as worthy of our metropolis; and at last my ambition is realised, and, by the co-operation of Mr. Richard A. Robertson, I am enabled to offer this one. I should, however, be unworthy of this success, did I now fail to acknowledge the unvarying kindness with which the public of New York has cheered me in my professional pathway. For two years I have been absent from you; and in that time I have worked hard, and endured much anxiety — as was naturally the case, with such an enterprise as this upon my hands. But now I have returned, once more, I trust, to enjoy your favour. When the Winter Garden was burnt down I had been announced to play Romeo; and it has seemed to me fitting that I should resume my professional labours before you, precisely at the point where they were so abruptly ended. For defects in the working of the scenery to-night I solicit your indulgence. I sincerely thank you for your presence."

An address, in verse, written for the occasion by the dramatist and actor, Edmund Falconer, of London, was printed in the play-bill of the night, but was not spoken. The performance of *Romeo and Juliet* was followed with eager attention, and at many points the pleasure of the assemblage broke forth in applause. Booth presented a carefully studied ideal of Romeo, different from that which is usually offered — its peculiarity being uncommon fidelity to nature in preserving the immaturity of the sentimental period of youth. The Verona lover


SHAKESPEARE
BOOTH'S THEATRE
Business Manager, J. HENRY MAGONIGLE.
Treasurer, J. A. BOOTH. Stage Manager, MARK SMITH.
Leader of Orchestra, E. MOLLENHAUER.
Mr. EDWIN BOOTH
RESPECTFULLY ANNOUNCES
WEDNESDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 3, 1869,
AS THE
OPENING NIGHT
OF HIS THEATRE, WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF
ROMEO AND JULIET:
INTRODUCING
Miss MARY McVICKER, as Juliet.
Miss FANNY MORANT, as the Nurse.
Mr. EDWIN ADAMS, as Mercutio.
Mr. MARK SMITH, as Friar Lawrence.
Mr. EDWIN BOOTH, as Romeo.
WITH A FULL AND EFFICIENT COMPANY.
CAST:
Escalus, Prince of Verona, Mr. A. PITHO
Paris, a Young Nobleman, Kinsman to the Prince, Mr. FRED. MONROE
Montague, Heads of two houses, at variance with Mr. THOMAS J. HIND
Capulet, each other, Mr. A. W. FENNO
An Old Man of the Capulet Family, Mr. W. C. DRUMMOND
Romeo, Son to Montague, Mr. EDWIN BOOTH
Mercutio, Kinsman to the Prince, and friend to Romeo, Mr. EDWIN ADAMS
Benvolio, Nephew of Montague, and friend to Romeo Mr. CHARLES NORRIS
Tybalt, Nephew to Lady Capulet, Mr. HARRY LANGDON
Friar Lawrence, a Franciscan, Mr. MARK SMITH
Friar John, of the same order, Mr. J. P. DEUEL
Balthazar, Servant to Romeo, Mr. G. A. VINTON
Peter, Mr. CHARLES PETERS
Sampson, Servants to Capulet, Mr. JOHN CHATTERSON
Gregory, Mr. NELSON DECKER
Abraham, Servant to Montague, Mr. HENRY HOGAN
An Apothecary, Mr. HECTOR MACKEY
First Musician, Mr. AUGUSTUS WATERS
Second Musician, Mr. W. H. V. WINTLE
Third Musician, Mr. C. J. BADE
Lady Capulet, Wife to Capulet, Miss E. V. PRIDDIPPET
Juliet, Daughter to Capulet, Miss MARY McVICKER
Nurse to Juliet, Miss FANNY MORANT
Kinsfolk of both Houses; Maskers, Guards, Watchmen and Attendants.
SCENE,—Verona, Mantua.
The Tragedy will be produced in strict accordance with historical propriety, in every respect; following closely the text of SHAKESPEARE (even)

THE FIRST PLAYBILL AT BOOTH'S THEATRE.

was made boyish until the explosive point in the third act, when Romeo avenges Mercutio by killing Tybalt. After that he was shown to be rapidly matured, under the pressure of calamity and grief. That view of Shakespeare's conception found ardent admirers. Another notable peculiarity of the performance was its presentation of the street-fight between the Montagues and the Capulets. Edwin Adams played Mercutio; Mark Smith, Friar Lawrence; Fenno, Capulet; Hind, Montague; Langdon, Tybalt; Charles Peters, Peter; Fanny Morant, the Nurse. Mark Smith was stage-manager; Waller was prompter: but Smith proved careless in stage direction and he soon gave place to Waller, in that office. The scenery was magnificent. *Romeo and Juliet* ran for ten weeks, and earned upward of sixty thousand dollars.

Othello was brought out, with excellent appointments, on April 12, and it ran until May 29. Booth acted Othello. That tragedy, as the analysis and portrayal of jealousy, aroused by suspicion of outrage against the affections and the marriage bond, leaves nothing to be thought or said. As the embodiment of a harrowing and pathetic story, it overwhelms the mind with horror and the heart with anguish. As a study of human nature, it pierces to the lowest depth of its subject, and delineates character and passion with a breadth of view and a firmness of touch that are wonderful. As a work of art it is perfect — being, in construction, the best of Shakespeare's plays. Those truths are clearer to the reader of the play than they can be to the spectator of its representation. *Othello* is not spoken precisely as Shakespeare wrote it — and no thinker could wish to

see it so used; for the poet has pursued his theme to every issue, sparing neither loathsome image nor foul word, nor veiling nor extenuating the unclean passions and hellish villany that are his instruments. Even when modified upon the stage *Othello* seems the dissection of something excrescent and dreadful — the distinctly brutal side of human nature. Yet literature would be incomplete without it, and no lover of the drama would desire to see it banished from the theatre. It should be claimed, though, as the right of sensibility and taste, that a work so terrible shall not be lightly presented. That claim was satisfied in Booth's revival. Booth was the most poetic Othello our stage has known — presenting an ideal far higher and finer than the more popular one of Signor Salvini, because neither sensual nor ferocious. Booth in Othello was faithful to the poet and faithful to the best traditions of the English stage. He laid much stress upon the magnanimity of the Moor's nature; he emphasised the undertone of sadness which, as the result of ecstatic happiness, runs through the character; and he made the killing of Desdemona a solemn and terrible sacrifice. He did not possess the stalwart figure that is commonly associated with Othello, but he gave to him a picturesque and impressive aspect, and he imparted his soul, his passion, and his misery as they are expressed in Shakespeare. The tragedy had forty-two successive presentations, and in closing its career Booth closed his first engagement at his new house.

Edwin Adams,[1] who had acted Mercutio and Iago, in

[1] Edwin Adams, — an actor of exceptional charm and talent, in romantic drama, and a man of singular gentleness and simplicity, — was born, near Boston, Mass., February 3, 1834; went on the stage August 29, 1853; rose

the two Shakespearian revivals that have been mentioned, succeeded Booth, on May 31, and acted till July 31, in *The Lady of Lyons*, *Narcisse*, *The Marble Heart*, *Wild Oats*, and *Enoch Arden*. Jefferson, as Rip Van Winkle — that perfect exposition of lovely temperament, delicious humour, and imaginative and pathetic experience — appeared on August 2, and acted till September 18. Miss Kate Bateman followed, and with twenty-four performances of *Leah* and thirty-six of *Mary Warner*, carried the season on till the last of November.

to favour, and, after a career of some vicissitudes, died, in Philadelphia, October 28, 1877. While he was on his death-bed, Booth, who was acting in Philadelphia, visited him, and wrote to me, in a characteristic strain, as follows: —

"As often as my duties permit, I visit poor Adams; nearly every day. The dear, good boy patiently endures the tortures of his terrible disease. The hearts of all who see him now, and who know how free his life has been from ill toward others, must ache — as mine does. Like *Mercutio*, he gasps forth an occasional jest; yet reverently realises the awfulness of his position. His clear conscience, and his mind sparkling with harmless mirth, break, now and then, through the clouds which gather, closer and closer, daily, about his poor, frail body. There is not a passing shadow on the soul whose greatest sin was the neglect of its tenement. He is thoughtful and resigned; and oh! so patient in the midst of his great sufferings. His chief regret is for his wife, who is most devoted to him, and who has nursed him for eighteen months, as only a loving woman can do! God grant that the promised pecuniary relief, at least, may be afforded her."

The desired relief was obtained, by performances for the benefit of Adams, in New York and Philadelphia, October 12, and Pittsburgh, October 17. The net receipts were $9381. Edward A. Sothern was chairman of the Benefit committee. — Everybody loved Edwin Adams. The references to him in newspaper articles and in private letters were all in one strain. John T. Raymond wrote: "Poor Ned Adams. We began our career almost the same day. We went to Philadelphia together, and began there, in *The Soldier's Daughter*. He, poor fellow, was *the hit* of the evening. We were together when he first met Mary — now his widow. God bless his memory!"

The first original play performed in the new theatre — Arthur Matthison's dramatisation of *Enoch Arden* — was presented on the off-nights of Miss Bateman's engagement.[1] Hackett, as Falstaff, played from November 29 till December 25. Mrs. Emma Waller came then, and strongly impressed the public by her vigorous and pathetic performance of Meg Merrilies. Mrs. Waller, now retired from the stage, had the advantages of a stately presence; a strong physique; a clear, melodious, sympathetic voice; thorough training and abundant experience in that good old school which produced Ellen Tree, Mrs. Barrett, and Charlotte Cushman; the grand style of demeanour that suits the heroines of the higher order of drama; an equal capacity for depicting woman-like softness and the pomp and dignity of imaginative ideals; and a devotion, which never faltered, to the highest ambitions and worthiest purposes connected with the stage. On January 5, 1870, Booth reappeared, in Hamlet, the stage accessories being fine beyond precedent, and he continued to play that part till March 19. He was subsequently seen as Sir Giles, Claude Melnotte, and Macbeth. John S. Clarke, as De Boots and Mr.

[1] Booth received from Tennyson the subjoined letter, in reference to the production of *Enoch Arden* at Booth's theatre.

BLACKDOWN, HALSEMERE, September 9, 1869.

DEAR SIR, — I have just heard from Mr. Arthur Matthison of the success that has attended your production of *Enoch Arden*, at your theatre in New York, and I have received Mr. Winter's critique upon it. I think it is hardly necessary for me to say how much gratified I am by the account of the success which has attended your spirited efforts in bringing out this drama.

I am, sir, your obliged and faithful servant,

A. TENNYSON.

EDWIN BOOTH, Twenty-third street, New York.

Toodle, began an engagement on April 18, and subsequently, appearing as Bob Tyke, Babington Jones, Gosling, and Tom Tackle, he remained till May 28. J. H. McVicker, in Charles Gayler's comedy of *Taking the Chances*, then filled a short engagement. The play of *The Huguenot* was brought forward on June 14, and kept on the stage till July 4, when the theatre was closed. It reopened on August 15, when Jefferson once more — and for a period of five months — delighted the public with his Rip Van Winkle. He acted the part one hundred and forty-nine times in succession, and his engagement extended till January 7, 1871. On January 9, Booth reappeared, presenting *Richelieu*, which was revived with such splendour of scenes and dresses as not even this theatre, famed for richness and beauty of stage embellishments, had before displayed. That piece was kept on the stage eight weeks, and it had forty-eight representations. On March 6, Booth produced *Much Ado about Nothing*, and appeared, for the first time in New York, as Benedick. Fourteen performances were given, and it was then succeeded, on March 20, by *Othello*, Booth acting the Moor, and Lawrence Barrett Iago. A revival of *The Fool's Revenge* occurred on April 3, and Booth enacted Bertuccio. On April 24 *A Winter's Tale* was brought out, with Lawrence Barrett as Leontes. The stage setting of that piece cost about forty thousand dollars. It ran till June 3. On June 5, W. G. Wills's beautiful play of *The Man of Airlie* was enacted, with Barrett as James Harebell; and this — a noble addition to the literature of the stage — was performed till the close of the theatrical year, and the closing of the house, on July 4. A

new theatrical year began on August 14, when Lotta was brought forward, in John Brougham's drama of *Little Nell* — based on the *Old Curiosity Shop* of Dickens. Lotta's performances extended till September 25. Charlotte Cushman, returning to the stage after ten years of retirement — a retirement from which the illustrious actress emerged in all the stateliness and intellectual fire of other days — then began an engagement, as Queen Katharine, in Shakespeare's *Henry the Eighth.* William Creswick likewise appeared at that time[1] as Cardinal Wolsey. Those actors were afterward seen in *Macbeth,* and Miss Cushman thrilled the public with her startling embodiment of Meg Merrilies. John E. Owens appeared as Caleb Plummer, on November 6. One of the most splendid and most successful achievements of Edwin Booth's career in Booth's theatre was his production of *Julius Cæsar,* — Christmas night, 1871, — in which at different times he represented Brutus, Cassius, and Antony, and in which Lawrence Barrett gained lasting fame as Cassius. That revival of the great Roman play was one of the highest artistic achievements and one of the most imposing spectacles of the modern stage — well worthy to be recorded and remembered with Charles Kean's sumptuous presentment of *The Tempest.* The tragedy was repeated eighty-five

[1] Three years later, on December 27, 1875, Messrs. Jarrett and Palmer being then managers of Booth's theatre, *Julius Cæsar* was again presented there. The scenery that Booth had provided was once more used, with the addition of a funeral fire-scene, originally devised for the conclusion of *Coriolanus,* at Niblo's Garden. E. L. Davenport as Brutus, Lawrence Barrett as Cassius, F. C. Bangs as Antony, Milnes Levick as Cæsar, H. A. Weaver as Casca, Mary Wells as Portia, and Rosa Rand as Calphurnia, were then included in the cast. The run extended to April 8, 1876.

times — until March 16, 1872. This array of facts and dates has a barren aspect but a worthy significance. It shows, in Booth's mind, a conscientious sense of the obligations to public morality and the cause of education that rest on a theatrical manager; and it shows that the affairs of his theatre were conducted in a steadfast spirit of sympathy with what is pure and good in dramatic art.[1] In 1871 Booth purchased his partner's interest in the theatre, and became its sole proprietor. In 1873 he retired from it. In 1874 he failed, and the theatre then passed out of his hands. It was leased, after his withdrawal, by Junius Brutus Booth, Jarrett and Palmer, Augustin Daly, and others, and many efforts were made — mostly in vain —to establish it in public favour. Edwin's elder brother, Junius, became manager of Booth's theatre, in June 1873, and directed it for one season, — in the course of which he effected a revival of Shakespeare's *King John*, himself playing King John, and his wife, Agnes Booth, playing Constance. Subsequently he produced *That Lass o' Lowrie's* and made a hit as the ruffian Lowrie. He had previously been seen at Booth's theatre, — in February 1872, — as Cassius, in *Julius Cæsar*. Jarrett and Palmer managed Booth's theatre from May 1, 1874 (opening it on August 15) till April, 1877; and during their reign many stars appeared and many productions were accomplished. John McCullough, Katherine Rogers, Mr. and Mrs. Bar-

[1] "Booth's theatre," said Jefferson, "is conducted as a theatre should be — like a church behind the curtain and like a counting-house in front of it." "I have been," said Dion Boucicault, "in every theatre, I think, in civilised Christendom, and Booth's is the only theatre that I have seen properly managed." — Boucicault first appeared at Booth's theatre on September 23, 1872.

ney Williams, Charlotte Cushman, George Vandenhoff, Joseph Jefferson, John S. Clarke, George Fawcett Rowe, Matilda Heron, George Rignold, Adelaide Neilson, Clara Morris, Barry Sullivan, George Belmore, Clara Louise Kellogg, George L. Fox, Mrs. Emma Waller, Genevieve Ward, E. L. Davenport, Lawrence Barrett, Dion Boucicault, Milnes Levick, Agnes Booth, F. C. Bangs, and F. B. Warde were among the actors made prominent upon that stage, and presentments were effected of *Venice Preserved*, September 12, 1874; *Henry V.*, February 8, 1875; *Julius Cæsar*, December 27, 1875; *Sardanapalus*, August 14, 1876; and *King Lear*, — with Lawrence Barrett as Lear, — December 4, 1876. Charlotte Cushman took leave of the New York stage, at Booth's theatre, under that management, November 7, 1874, as Lady Macbeth. The theatre was finally closed, on April 30, 1883, with a performance of *Romeo and Juliet* — the same piece with which it had been opened, fourteen years before. Mme. Modjeska played Juliet. A little later the house was demolished, and its site is now (1893) occupied by shops.

Once, in the history of Booth's theatre, chance placed a rare opportunity within the reach of Booth, and caprice or negligence allowed it to pass. John S. Clarke, who was in London, apprised him that the lease of the Lyceum theatre could be obtained, and proposed that Booth should hire and manage the Lyceum, retaining his theatre at home, and should divide the time between London and New York; and Clarke suggested that Adelaide Neilson and the Vokes family should be engaged for Booth's theatre, so that Booth could immediately proceed to London and produce *Hamlet*, *Riche-*

lieu, and other great plays, with which his name was auspiciously associated. Booth acceded to that plan, and the requisite negotiations were begun; but something went wrong, there was lack of decisive action, and at a critical moment H. L. Bateman, who was in London, applied for the Lyceum lease and obtained it; and later, under the Bateman management, arose the golden star of Henry Irving. If Booth had leased the Lyceum theatre, at that time, he would have had control of the tragic field, alike in England and America; and although he would neither have felt the desire nor had the power to prevent the rise of that fine genius, yet, as Irving was comparatively unknown, and as no formidable rival was in sight, Booth must necessarily have directed the current of theatrical affairs, almost entirely according to his judgment and will. Bateman's plan was to present his daughter, Miss Kate Bateman, in *Leah*. Bateman early saw the brilliant capability and the wonderful charm of Henry Irving, and he was not slow to provide that actor with an opportunity. The production of *The Bells*, indeed, was accomplished through Irving's repeated and urgent solicitation, and therefore was only another instance of the universal truth that genius achieves its own success. Still, but for Bateman's sovereignty at the Lyceum, Irving might not have found so easily or so soon the prominence that was essential for his magnificent triumph; and but for Booth's vacillation, Booth and Clarke, and not Bateman, would have had the Lyceum.

The mainspring of Booth's nature was love of the beautiful; the chief motive of his conduct a noble ambition for intellectual success. Devotion to ideals and

nobility of purpose, however, are not necessarily either always or often a passport to the admiration of mankind. The cause of Booth's advancement was the power of genius, combined with personal charm. He sought to exalt the standard of dramatic art — not because he was specifically interested in the public welfare but because he was naturally prone to symmetry and loveliness of expression. He wished to establish, in the principal city of his native land, a theatre of the highest order, to be devoted to plays and actors of the best kind. For the accomplishment of that object he was willing to give, and did give, the resolute, zealous effort of the best years of his life, together with all the wealth that he could acquire. He first organised the Winter Garden, which was burnt down, and he then established Booth's theatre, which was hampered by his injudicious financial arrangements, at the beginning, and was needlessly and unwisely taken from him, at the end. In those enterprises he did not seek for personal gain, but for the maintenance of dramatic art.[1] He was sincere and he was unselfish. Those who were near to him, and knew him, recognised the excellence of his motives and the magnanimity of his conduct; but the public in general cared little for his aims and less for his labours. People do not attend the theatre because

[1] "I had no desire for gain. My only hope was to establish the pure, legitimate drama in New York, and by my example to incite others, actors and managers, to continue the good work. . . . Our object (referring to Clarke and himself, in the Winter Garden) was solely to elevate the tone of our art, without even half an eye to the dollar; for we well knew there were not 'millions in it.' No; we would take our chances of making money outside of New York, and be satisfied with the *glory* of the good work we would accomplish there." — MS. NOTE BY E. B., 1874.

its manager is actuated by a worthy purpose, but because the theatre provides them with entertainment. The community admired and followed Booth because he was a delightful actor and a fascinating man. His relations with those two theatres, however, — his motives in their establishment and his experience in their conduct, — cast an instructive light alike upon his character and his career.

There was always, during Booth's lifetime, a desire, which, at various seasons and places, made itself manifest in the Press, to depreciate his achievements, to asperse his motives, and to degrade his renown. Such a desire invariably shows itself, with reference to all persons of exceptional ability and worth. With the lower order of human beings the virtues of such persons "serve them but as enemies." Booth began with youth, beauty, genius, ability, an auspicious name, many advantages of circumstance, and abundant good-fortune. That was enough to win enemies for him, and enemies, accordingly, he had. They were chiefly journalists, and their grievance, fomented by the tongue of falsehood, grew out of the fact that Booth gave no particular attention to the Press, and did not think himself the creation of the newspapers. It is one of the delusions of many writers upon the stage that they "make" and "unmake" the reputation of actors — the fact being that an actor either wins or repels the public, and thus either succeeds or fails, precisely in proportion to his possession or lack of personal charm. Commentators may stimulate the flow of the current, but they do not determine its direction. The too prevalent newspaper notion, on the other hand, is that the Press settles every-

thing; and, in accordance with that notion, it was, in some quarters, customary to ascribe the reputation of Booth to the pen of his associate, William Stuart — the fugacious O'Flaherty, of the Winter Garden. That person was supposed to have lured the community into admiration of Booth, by writing articles about him in the newspapers. The truth is that Booth's ascendency as an actor had been gained, and his popularity established, before he ever saw Stuart; and it is also true that, during the period of his business association with that disloyal friend, and for some time afterward, Booth received from the hands of Stuart more injury than benefit. Stuart was an exile. He had made an unfortunate error in England, and had thought proper to leave that country. He came to America, changed his name, and presently found occupation as a writer for the Press and as a theatrical agent. In 1853 he was a contributor to the *New York Tribune*, then managed by Charles A. Dana, and for that journal he wrote a series of articles antagonistic to Edwin Forrest. In later years he assured me that he was at that time inexperienced as a playgoer, ignorant of the stage, and unskilled in the subject, and that his plan simply was, to write a description of the character to be presented, and then to set against it a scathing account of the performance, as something wholly at variance with the author and with truth, and in that way to assail Forrest and make him ridiculous. To Stuart the whole matter was a bitter jest — and such, indeed, was everything else in life. Stuart's writings were trenchant and glib. He had little or no capacity of thought, but he had ample resources of invective, a sufficient command of satirical,

caustic humour, and a subtle instinct that taught him precisely how and where to wound. He it was who invented the ridiculous story, still current, that a stanza of "Woodman, spare that tree," a puerile song by Gen. George P. Morris, — who had given Stuart employment on the *Home Journal*, and was, therefore, the proper object of his satire, — being quoted, in a debate in the English House of Commons, so affected the sensibilities of the members that it put an end to the session. At home Stuart had been engaged in politics. His knowledge of practical affairs was extensive; his perception of human nature was uncommonly acute; his animal spirits were abundant; and he could assume, at will, the comrade, the philanthropist, the philosopher, and the saint. It was not until you came to know him well that you discovered, beneath his outside varnish of effusive geniality, a bitter and censorious disposition, and a nature so warped by vanity, worldliness, and thwarted ambition that he saw all things with a suspicious eye, believed ill of everybody, and, while he would flatter and cringe for advantage, could not speak the name even of a benefactor without detraction and ridicule. That individual had been, by chance, associated with the success of Matilda Heron — whom also he claimed to have "made" — as Camille, and at that time had offered to Booth, by telegraph, the part of Armand Duval, — an offer which Booth had declined. At the later time of the Jarrett benefit, when they first met, Stuart was an agent for Wallack's theatre, and after that performance he again made a business proposition to Booth, for a repetition of Iago, and also for an engagement at Wallack's. That overture likewise was

repelled. Booth, at that period, notwithstanding his intemperance, — which he had not yet conquered, but which afterwards he utterly subdued, — and notwithstanding his consequent neglect of his business and disregard of his reputation, was in the prime of public favour. The mere announcement that he would act at Niblo's Garden, as Iago, to the Othello of Charles Pope, — the performance being for the benefit of Benjamin Baker, who had been his agent, — sufficed to attract an audience that crowded that great theatre in every part. His engagements with Jackson, a little later, at the Winter Garden, were in the highest degree prosperous; so that never at any time did he stand in need of the missionary services of Stuart; and, indeed, nothing could be more foolish than the pretension that Stuart ever, under any circumstances, did anything to "make the reputation" of Booth. It was not till the autumn of 1862 that Stuart succeeded in getting into Booth's service; his object being to obtain complete control of the Winter Garden, and of Booth as a remunerative star. At that time the owners of the theatre, the La Farge family, finding that Booth and Clarke wished to hire it, gave them the preference over Jackson, and they subsequently permitted Stuart to come in as a partner, with a third interest in the profits, and a salary for his services in the front of the house. Booth and Clarke were to receive nothing, as actors, until the play, whatever it might be, had earned the cost of its production, when they were to get half of the nightly net profits. Upon the basis of that agreement the astute O'Flaherty prospered; and, but that his folly out-ran his discretion,

he might long have enjoyed the rewards of sagacity and persistence. A splenetic cynic, however, always sooner or later discloses his true nature. Stuart was willing to live by the stage, but he despised it; he held all actors in the greatest contempt; and, especially, he disliked those persons to whom he was under the obligation of gratitude. Self-interest should have kept him silent. It did not. He habitually spoke of Booth with ridicule and aspersion. He represented to the journalists that Booth was a dull man, who detested and derided them, while to Booth he spoke of the journalists as bores and blackguards. I have myself heard, not without protest, his disparagement of Booth; and Booth told me that Stuart begged him to avoid the people of the Press, any one of whom, he declared, would murder his grandmother for a sixpence. In certain resentful moods Stuart[1] would say anything. His particular horror was that an actor should, in the public esteem, be rated higher than such men as himself, and when that feeling prevailed, Booth became the principal theme of his jocular satire and contemptuous scorn. All the stock misrepresentations of Booth that have drifted through the American press originated with him. Yet, all the while he was privately disparaging the actor he did not scruple to profit by him, and when the first lease, for one year, of the Winter Garden expired, he privately obtained its renewal, to himself, as sole lessee. Stuart's extraordinary diplomacy and plausible amiability, however, sufficed to keep him long in the tolerance,

[1] William Stuart — Edmund O'Flaherty of Knockbane — was born in Galway, Ireland, July 7, 1821, and he died in New York, December 27, 1886, aged 65. He was buried in the Cemetery of the Holy Cross, in Brooklyn.

if not the favour, even of those who knew how false he was. Booth had been aware of his duplicity, and naturally desirous to be rid of him, for some time before the burning of the Winter Garden; but Booth was of a gentle and indolent temperament, averse to action, and incapable of giving pain.[1] The burning of the theatre terminated the partnership, and thereafter, against much importunity, Booth refused all further association with Stuart — a proceeding which was ascribed to black ingratitude.

Two other manufacturers of genius and renown also claimed the "making" of Edwin Booth. One was Benjamin Baker, already mentioned, once a stage-manager at Sacramento, — where Booth did him the favour to act, in a farce, for his benefit, — and at the last an officer in the service of the Actors' Fund. Baker's claim was, that he had "picked Edwin Booth out of the quartz, in California." The other "creator" was William Wheatley, who customarily declared that his liberality and good management, when Booth acted with him at the Arch Street theatre, Philadelphia, had given him fame and fortune. In both cases the pretension was ludicrous. Those who knew Wheatley, though, will be surprised at his moderation — for he was not quite clear that he had not made the world.

In the building and management of Booth's theatre the experience of Booth was less painful than it had been in the Winter Garden, but it was not less troublesome. The determination to establish and maintain a theatre of the highest order was predominant in his mind, and at first, after he lost the Winter Garden, his

[1] "I entertain for Stuart nothing harsher than a feeling of pity that one of such ability to please all, and to make all respect, if not love him, should be so utterly lost to truth." — MS. NOTE BY E. B., 1874.

resolve was thenceforth to proceed alone. Within five weeks after the burning, however, he had made the error of seeking another partnership, and of admitting to association with his enterprise a commonplace business speculator, kindly enough, and brisk and shrewd, but of ordinary taste and meagre abilities, and in no way fitted to be associated with a theatre, otherwise than, possibly, as a janitor. In the Winter Garden he had been affiliated with an insidious schemer. In Booth's theatre he had the misfortune to become implicated with a commonplace tradesman. Robertson knew nothing about the theatre, or about actors, or about the proper conduct of theatrical art. He was a vain person, inflated by his association with Booth, — who at one time liked him for pleasant social qualities, and admired his apparent wisdom and skill in business, — and he saw, in that association, the opportunity of making himself conspicuous and rich. Booth had "no head for figures," and was easily both confused and impressed by those florid arithmetical paintings of monetary schemes in which the financial expert is commonly so picturesque, and persuasive. Robertson was a financier. The only condition upon which Booth insisted, in the partnership agreement pertaining to the building of Booth's theatre, was that the theatre should eventually become his individual property. It was estimated that the building would cost $500,000. It was agreed that Robertson should invest from $75,000 to $150,000, and that Booth should invest the rest, — the estate standing in the name of Booth. The partnership was to continue five years. Booth was to receive four-sevenths of the profits of the theatre, and Robertson was

to receive three-sevenths — and at the end of five years Robertson was to receive a bonus of $100,000, and yield to Booth the sole title to the theatre. It was further agreed that Booth should have the right to cancel the partnership, at any time, upon payment to Robertson of all that he had invested, together with the bonus of $100,000.[1] The selection of a site had been left to Magonigle, who chose the land in Twenty-third street — and straightway the work began. Booth paid for it, land and all, acting in the provinces, and remitting large sums of money for that purpose. Robertson, from time to time, contributed paper,[2] which the theatre was eventually to redeem, and did redeem, partly, it is presumable, out of his share of the profits. In that way Booth's theatre was built. Shortly before it was opened, Robertson, dissatisfied with his contract, prevailed on Booth to give him, without consideration, in addition to what had already been allowed, three-sevenths of the real estate. "He struck at the proper moment," Booth afterwards wrote (February 1876), "just as my fire was hottest, blowing me to a white heat. To get that theatre open I would have said 'yes,' had he asked for all of it." Under those circumstances, when Booth's theatre opened, Robertson, originally a silent partner, for the purpose of starting the theatre, had become a part owner of the real estate; and he at once began to participate in the

[1] "If his five years' share of profit did not yield the $75,000, or as much more as he should have invested, I should make up the deficiency. In brief, he was to receive $175,000 sure, and as much more as might accrue from his three-sevenths share, during the term of our co-partnership." — MS. NOTE BY E. B., 1876.

[2] "Robertson certainly never invested a cent of solid money in Booth's theatre." — MS. NOTE BY E. B., February 1876.

management, objecting that there was an excess of devotion to "high art." Under his influence and upon his urgency Miss Lotta was presented — a charming woman and a sprightly performer, but inappropriate to a classic theatre. Robertson then proposed to purchase Booth's interest, — offering mortgaged lands, valued at $250,000, — with the avowed design of converting the theatre into a popular variety house. "I appreciate your delicacy and artistic feeling," he said to Booth, "and I cannot expect you to stoop to that; but it will make no difference to me, as a man of business. I shall revolutionise the whole method of management." Booth declined that offer, but closed with a proposal that he should buy the interest of Robertson, — most of which he had originally given. An accountant was employed, to ascertain that interest. It was found that the land had cost $250,000. The cost of the building could not be determined — for the reason that Booth's treasurer, his brother Joseph, had inextricably blended with the construction account the cost of producing *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Winter's Tale*. Those accounts could not be separated. A basis of computation was reached, however, and Booth purchased his partner's interest, October 1871, for $240,000, — giving $100,000 in money, and conveying valuable real estate at Long Branch, New London, and Harlem.[1]

[1] "I had made him a free gift of it, and now I must buy it at this figure, merely to get rid of him. I had no money, but my real estate would do as well — Mary's Long Branch place, six acres at New London, and two lots and a house at Harlem. . . . He managed to get every foot of real estate out of my possession, except the Twenty-fourth street property, which he could not touch, it being in Edwina's name." — MS. NOTE BY E. B., February 1876.

It has been customary to speak of Booth's theatre as "a failure." Booth managed it for over four years, and almost everything that he presented upon its stage was accepted and sustained by the public. The net profits of the house, during its first year, were $102,000; during its second year, $85,000; during its third year, $70,000. A mortgage of $100,000 was lifted. The floating debt was reduced from $66,000 to $24,000. The decline in receipts, obviously, was due to a natural subsidence of public curiosity with reference to a new enterprise. Booth retired from management in June 1873, because he had grown weary, and because his health, equally of mind and body, was suffering under the strain of care. At that time the total debt of the theatre, secured by mortgage, was $350,000. Booth thereafter received income, from rents of the theatre, at the annual rate of $73,000. His bankruptcy did not occur until nearly a year after his retirement, and the one was in no way consequent upon the other.[1]

[1] "Booth secured the site and purchased the ground, making a cash payment and leaving a heavy encumbrance. R. A. Robertson became associated with Booth, and undertook the erection of the building — the understanding being that he was to furnish the money, with the exception of what Booth could earn during the time the building was in progress. Here was the first wrong step. Booth, of course, had confidence in Robertson's ability, and the work went on. Money seemed to be ready, at all times, but it was obtained, on the credit of Booth's name, by a system of shaving on short loans, entirely wrong in an undertaking so large. The theatre was a success, as a theatrical enterprise, but the heavy debt was carried at a heavy expense, and no financial scheme seemed to be adopted. Several mortgages had been given, at short time and high rates, instead of being consolidated and carried for ten years, so that the profits of the business and Booth's outside earnings might, in that time, — and would, — have paid every dollar; and the monument erected in the cause of art

The financial tempest of 1873–74, in which many stalwart financial houses were shaken, caused embarrassment in the affairs of Booth. The foreclosure of mortgages on his theatre property was imminent. An injudicious assignment was effected. And, finally, another superserviceable counsellor, — impelled by that wilful perversity of self-opinion, which in some natures accompanies a troublesome propensity to regulate the affairs of other people, — led him into bankruptcy.[1] Booth was an unskilful financier, but Booth's theatre was not a failure. Things that are vacuous and trivial have always

would have been the property of its rightful owner, who had toiled so long and hard to achieve his laudable ambition. . . . Booth bought R. out and assumed all outstanding liabilities — amounting to more than the enterprise was to have cost, at the original estimate. . . . The panic of 1873 came, and everybody wanted the money due, then and there. November 14, 1873, Booth yielded to bad advice, and conveyed the entire property, for no consideration, being led to believe that it would be protected, and carried, till a favourable sale could be made and the property pay the debts. This scheme proved futile, and then, by further advice, Booth filed a petition for voluntary bankruptcy, January 26, 1874. . . . The assignee had possession of the property from November 14, 1873, to March 27, 1874. . . . There is no doubt, had Booth been in the hands of proper attorneys, his property could have been saved for him — for such was its true value it could have been bonded for all the indebtedness; but Booth had no faculty for handling such matters. . . . Had Booth's financial affairs been conducted with anything like the ability he displayed in artistic matters, only success would have been the result; but, unfortunately, he was of a confiding nature." — MS. NOTE BY JAMES H. MCVICKER, 1876–77.

[1] Booth was released from the legal meshes of bankruptcy, and from the clutches of the lawyers, in March, 1875, by the sagacious and practical action of James H. McVicker, of Chicago, who bought every claim against him, became his sole creditor, and allowed him the necessary time for paying all. Booth, at that period, could earn $75,000 a year, and he soon paid Mr. McVicker. Booth's theatre, however, had been sold.

had the largest audience, and probably always will have it — mankind being what it is. But there was a public that steadily followed Booth, and sustained him in all his worthy works. His experience after his bankruptcy proved his prestige — for he paid his debts and earned another fortune. He surely might have carried his theatre had he chosen to remain at the head of it. His burden, indeed, was made heavier than it ought to have been, by his unpractical conduct and his heedless trust in others. The original cost of his theatre ought to have been, and might have been, much smaller. The business affiliation that he formed was unfortunate. His simplicity made him the easy prey of craft. For those reasons, and because he was indifferent to popular applause, averse to society, except of a chosen few, and of a temperament inclining to moods of dejection, apathy, and gloom, he was at some disadvantage as a manager. He had, indeed, executive faculty, but its operation was fitful and evanescent. He disliked drudgery, and he soon tired of detail. He possessed prodigious power of the will. He was capable of great effort and long endurance. His character had extraordinary stability. Yet the temperament that made him fine in Hamlet unfitted him for the incessantly vigilant and energetic administration of practical affairs. He was a dreamer; and in every part of his life, as it was known to me during an intimacy extending over a period of about thirty years, I saw the operation of Hamlet's propensity to view all things as transitory and immaterial, and to let everything drift. He was happier as an actor than as a manager. Life would have been easier for him if

he had avoided management; but he did not fail in it, nor did the better class of the public fail in sympathy with his theatre and in practical support of it.[1]

Long after Booth's theatre closed, when he was in England in 1880, he wrote to me as follows: "I see that a Rev. Mr. Somebody has been abusing actors, etc., and refers, as is frequently done by such persons, to the failure of Booth's, and my letter to the *Christian*

[1] Booth's bankruptcy was recorded by me, in the *New York Tribune*, February 7, 1874, in these words: —

"Five years ago, after struggling through many troubles and much affliction, Booth found himself in a professional position that warranted him in the undertaking of a great theatrical enterprise. Had he consulted personal comfort and the chances of personal fortune alone — as he might have done, with the approbation of worldly minds, and with brilliant prospect of individual gain — he would not then have entered upon theatrical management, and to-day he would have been a wealthy as well as a popular and famous actor. Other motives than the prudent care of number one do, however, sometimes enter into the conduct of life. Booth was not unmindful of the debt which an artist owes to his profession, and he did not fail to realise that much was expected of him by the public that had, in such liberal measure, given him its affectionate sympathy and admiration. He made, therefore, the higher choice, and he erected in New York a theatre worthy of the capital city of the nation. No man was ever animated by a more single-hearted devotion to the cause of art than Booth displayed in that achievement; and he never lapsed from the high principles and good motives with which he began his work. As long as he managed Booth's theatre its stage was pure: intellectual and refined persons could find pleasure and benefit in the contemplation of it. His career as a manager was unsullied by even the least concession to a depraved taste, and it was marked by a constant tenderness toward the honest ambition of earnest, ingenuous youth, and by a steady, practical charity toward the indigent and suffering, both in the dramatic profession and out of it. His renown remains, and he will have the sympathy of the public, alike in his misfortune and disappointment, and in that manly resumption of work with which he has already confronted fate, and addressed himself to the future."

Union. When occasion again offers, I wish you would set them right, by stating positively that Booth's 'failure' was owing solely to his ignorance of finance, and not on account of his 'moral' theatre — which was a success, but for the financial mismanagement. Also that my letter was not directed against the theatre, but against a certain class of managers and plays. Several times these allusions have been made, in support of their false doctrines. If the theatre had cost but a couple of hundred thousand, instead of over a million, it never would have changed hands nor have ruined its proprietor."

Booth's letter to *The Christian Union* (now *The Outlook*), to which he thus refers, was written in reply to a request for an article on the drama, and was published in the Christmas number of that paper, in 1878: —

DEAR SIR: — On my arrival here I found your favour of the 1st inst., but have been prevented from answering it until to-day.

Having no literary ability whatever, I must decline your flattering invitation; nor do I know how to aid the worthy cause you advocate. Could I do so, be assured it should be freely done.

My knowledge of the modern drama is so very meagre that I never permit my wife or daughter to witness a play without previously ascertaining its character. This is the method I pursue. I can suggest no other; unless it might be by means of a "dramatic censor," — whose taste or judgment might, however, be frequently at fault.

If the management of theatres could be denied to speculators, and placed in the hands of actors who value their reputation and respect their calling, the stage would at least afford healthy recreation, if not, indeed, a wholesome stimulus to the exercise of noble sentiments. But while the theatre is permitted to be a mere shop for gain, — open to every huckster of immoral gim-cracks, — there is no other way to discriminate between the pure and base than through the experience of others. Yours truly,

EDWIN BOOTH.

December, 1878.

In the days of his management of the Winter Garden, Booth received a letter from a clergyman, saying that he wished to see Booth in Richelieu and other characters, and would like, if possible, to be admitted to the theatre by a side or rear door, as he preferred to run no risk of being seen, by any of his parishioners, entering at the front. To that communication Booth replied, in these words: "There is no door in my theatre through which God cannot see." The notion that the stage is not a proper resort for members of the church has, of late years, been dying out of the religious mind. It dies, however, somewhat slowly, — and that is much to be regretted. The stage can prosper without the church, but the church ought not to dispense with the stage. The religious community, everywhere, is as well entitled as any other to the advantages of the theatre, and it surely ought to recognise, in practice, what it cannot fail to perceive in fact, that the stage often is, and always can be made, a powerful influence for the welfare of mankind; and it ought to endeavour to use that influence for its own good, instead either of furtively conniving at what it publicly censures, or idly denouncing what it can neither arrest, embarrass, nor destroy. It was the great divine, John Wesley, who objected against letting the devil have all the good music. Christians of our day would be equally sensible to object to a satanic monopoly of good acting. There are some people who think that nothing has been discovered until it has been discovered by them; but, this controversy has, practically, long been ended. The church can do nothing to injure the stage. It might do much to improve it, and it might augment, in so doing, its own utility

and beauty, and its abiding hold upon the affections of its votaries.

The players whom Booth assembled at his theatre were artists of tried and proved ability. Several of them had been successful stars. Edwin Adams, in *The Dead Heart*, *Enoch Arden*, and other plays of the romantic school, was an actor of singular ability, tenderness, and power. James W. Wallack, Jr.,[1] in the *King of the Commons*, *The Iron Mask*, *Werner*, *Henry Dunbar*, and *Oliver Twist*, was versatile, passionate, picturesque, and deeply impressive — possessing an imaginative mind and great charm of personality. Mark Smith, whose range included Squire Broadlands, Sir William Fondlove, Dogberry, and Sir Peter Teazle, was a singing as well as an acting comedian, of the first order. Voices such as were possessed by those three actors have seldom been heard. The voice of Adams was perfect music. Wallack's tones went directly to the heart. Mark Smith's clear articulation and smooth, melodious vocalism were an infallible delight. Waller was an actor of fine stature, elastic tread, dark, romantic aspect, and manly grace, and in whatever part he acted his imagination and tremulous sensibility united to make him fine and true. James Stark, an old California favourite, famous in *Richelieu*, was a conscientious and thorough artist. D. C. Anderson, who in his younger days had been an effective representative of the parts

[1] Wallack was specially engaged by Booth, for the production of *The Bells*, which was acted at Booth's theatre, for the first time in America, August 19, 1872. Wallack played Mathias — the part that has been made famous by the wonderful acting of Henry Irving. He was the son of Henry John Wallack, and was born in London, February 24, 1818. He died on May 24, 1873, deeply lamented.

that are typified by Gratiano and Mercutio, was proficient in the old men, and, whether in the line of Polonius or in that of Dominie Sampson, never failed to please. Fenno, with his white hair, rosy countenance, and bland demeanour, excelled in parts requiring dignity and benignant grace. Thomas J. Hind, formal, gentle, eccentric, was a model of correctness and care, whether as the kindly parent or the crusty uncle. Charles R. Thorne, Jr., yet in his youth, was an image of romantic grace, pleasant both to see and hear, and he early gave evidence of elemental power. Lawrence Barrett was in the bloom of youthful manhood, ambitious, earnest, and remarkable for sombre imagination, restless intellect, and fierce energy. Mrs. Emma Waller, next to Charlotte Cushman, was the most powerful tragic actress upon the American stage, in that period — the only one, indeed, except Mrs. D. P. Bowers, with whom such characters as Lady Macbeth, Hermione, Constance, Queen Katharine, Meg Merrilies, and the Duchess of Malfi were readily feasible. Mary Wells, who had genuine comic humour as well as gentle gravity, could play anything, from Queen Gertrude to Mrs. Willoughby. Fanny Morant, the best Mrs. Candour that ever walked the stage, had not yet lost her ample beauty, and was brilliant in the execution of all that she attempted. One of the common and most persistent misrepresentations of Booth alleged that, from dread of damaging comparisons, he would not allow good actors to appear with him. Nothing could be further from the truth. He was never so well pleased as when his professional associates were artists of the highest order. A stock-company composed of Barretts, Wallacks, Gilberts, and

Jeffersons has not, in our time, been practicable; but Booth's company, as long as he continued in management, was the best that he could get. Besides the players just mentioned, Charles Fisher, Charles W. Couldock, George Clarke, Frank Mayo, D. H. Harkins, Milnes Levick, Joseph Wheelock, E. J. Buckley, Charles Barron, F. C. Bangs, Barton Hill, Augustus Pitou, W. E. Sheridan, Theodore Hamilton, John Norton, Maurice Barrymore, John A. Lane, W. R. Floyd, Louis Aldrich, Humphrey Bland, A. H. Davenport, Edwin Varrey, Charles Walcot, Jr., George Becks, Frank Lawlor, J. B. Mason, Edwin Cleary, Samuel Piercy, James Lewis, F. B. Warde, Otis Skinner, John Drew, and Eben Plympton were, at various times, his associates; and their testimony was unanimous that he treated them, not merely with professional justice but with considerate liberality. Mrs. Chanfrau, Ada Clifton, Effie Germon, Blanche de Bar, Rose Eytinge, Ida Vernon, Bella Pateman, Clara Jennings, Agnes Booth, Rachael Noah, Jeffreys Lewis, Annie Clarke, Elizabeth Robins, and Ellen Meyrick were among his leading ladies. William Davidge, Edward Lamb, Owen Fawcett, Robert Pateman, Charles Peters, Thomas Placide, Alfred Hudson, Sol Smith, Jr., and Vining Bowers were among his low comedians. When he had ceased to manage, and was travelling as a star, the players with whom he was associated, whether competent or otherwise, were provided by managers, — Booth having no voice in their selection. His censors, when dissatisfied with his support, ignored that fact; nor did they reflect that, because of Booth's marked superiority as a tragedian, even good actors seemed to be less good when they acted in his

company, and that almost all actors, when they appear in Shakespeare, are sometimes dwarfed by the poetic standard with which they invite comparison.

Booth was neither acquisitive of admiration nor jealous of actors who received it. To the distinguished foreign tragedian visiting America he was ever the first to extend a hand of welcome. In the Winter Garden days he invited that famous German actor, Bogumil Davison (Obiit. February 2, 1872, aged 54), to act with him, and a production of *Othello* was then effected, — December 29, 1866, with Davison as Othello, Booth as Iago, and Mme. Methua-Scheller as Desdemona, — the power and beauty of which were extraordinary: no actor could ever have surpassed Davison's pathos, in the passage succeeding the vindication of Desdemona. When Fechter first came to New York [his first appearance in America was made on January 10, 1870, at Niblo's Garden], Booth, who was acting Hamlet, at Booth's theatre, cordially offered to stand aside and allow the famous Anglo-Frenchman to take his place — and Fechter would have seized that opportunity had he not foolishly preferred, with his customary perverse and insane temper, to ascribe to Booth's alleged hostility every Press notice which had not hailed him as a paragon. One of Booth's pleasant recollections was that of his professional association with Fanny Janauschek. He greeted as a privilege, even after his health had begun to break, the opportunity of acting in company with Salvini.[1] He frequently recalled with enthu-

[1] Booth and Salvini acted together, April 26, 28, and 30, and May 1, 1886, at the Academy of Music, New York, in *Othello* and *Hamlet*. The former play was performed three times; the latter once. Salvini — speaking

siasm his professional affiliation with excellent and famous German actors, when he travelled in Germany. Meeting M. Coquelin, in Paris, in 1880, and finding that eminent comedian desirous of playing Iago, he promised to act Othello with him, if he should ever come to America. And when he spoke of his season with Henry Irving at the London Lyceum, he said it was a time of much happiness. It has been my fortune personally to know almost all the prominent actors of the last thirty years, and to hear many of them descant, in various moods, upon their brothers and sisters of the dramatic profession: I never knew an actor whose mind was more free than that of Booth from envy and bitterness. The prosperity of other actors gave him pleasure, and their adversity gave him pain. His judgment, at the same time, was absolutely impartial, while his speech, when occasion required it, was absolutely frank. When it was proposed to erect a public monument to commemorate John McCullough, he declined to participate in the

Italian — played Othello and the Ghost. Booth played Iago and Hamlet. Mrs. D. P. Bowers played Emilia and Queen Gertrude. Miss Marie Wainwright played Desdemona and Ophelia. C. W. Couldock played Brabantio and Polonius. Alexander Salvini played Cassio and Laertes. Barton Hill played the Doge and the King. John A. Lane played Montano and Horatio. All in English. The manager was Charles H. Thayer. Booth acted Macbeth, with Fanny Janauschek as Lady Macbeth, at the Boston theatre November 3, 1868, — Janauschek speaking German. A friend who was present wrote to me, at the time, as follows: "Booth's Macbeth was nearly perfect in delivery, remarkable in suggestive and illustrative business, and lit up with frequent flashes of genius. Janauschek was very fine, especially throughout the murder scene. Her 'Give me the daggers' was tremendously effective. Altogether her performance was sharply defined and vigorous. There was, however, a lack of adequate dignity in the banquet scene, and her manner was spasmodic in the sleep-walking passage."

movement. "I admire and respect McCullough's memory," he said; "but while my father, a much greater actor, remains without a public monument, I cannot see the justice of the proposed memorial."

With the more celebrated and prominent of his compatriots on the American stage, Booth's relations, while seldom those of intimacy, were usually those of esteem and kindness. Forrest, indeed, who had been friendly to the elder Booth, and who had known Edwin from childhood, resented the fame of the younger actor, and gradually came to view him with aversion. The fact that Booth acted in company with Catherine Sinclair, — Mrs. Forrest, — when in California, embittered Forrest's mind against him, and prevented friendship between them. Forrest, on two or three occasions, saw Booth act, but he was not heard to express approval. I never heard Booth speak of Forrest otherwise than with appreciative consideration for that cynical veteran. He much admired Charlotte Cushman, and several times acted with her, in *Macbeth*. It was to Booth that she expressed her peculiar view of that character. "Your rehearsal," she said, "is very interesting — but Macbeth was the great ancestor of all the Bowery ruffians." Once, at the Academy in Philadelphia, Booth and Miss Cushman acted together for two weeks, presenting *Macbeth*, the *Merchant of Venice*, *Henry the Eighth*, and *Katherine and Petruchio*. The first time Charlotte Cushman acted in New York as Hamlet she wore Booth's Hamlet robe. Booth maintained relations of kindly cordiality with J. W. Wallack, Jr., Charles Kean, John Albaugh, John Gilbert, J. H. Hackett, Charles Pope, C. W. Couldock, John McCullough,

E. A. Sothern,[1] Henry Edwards, Charles Fisher, John Brougham, W. J. Florence, Benjamin G. Rogers, James E. Murdoch, and many other contemporary players.

Booth's ideal of acting was high. The elements of the stage that he disliked were its drudgery and its triviality. He was impatient of the labour of rehearsal, and he was annoyed by the ignorance and vanity of the lower order of actors, whom he commonly designated

[1] Edward Askew Sothern, born in Liverpool, England, April 1, 1826; died in London, at No. 1 Vere street, January 20, 1881: the famous Dundreary. Booth, who was acting in London at the time of Sothern's death, wrote to me as follows, January 22, 1881: —

"After I had finished Othello last evening, January 21, I was told of poor Sothern's death. I had passed an hour with him on Monday, and I really thought he might die while I was at his bedside — he was so emaciated and weak. They had taken him to Bournemouth, at the doctor's suggestion; but he suffered so much there that he was hurried back to London. The journey there and back was enough to overwhelm a man in his condition. Poor fellow!

"What a full company of players has made its exit this twelvemonth past! And how strange it is that so many utterly worthless men are permitted to remain, while the good ones are taken away! And how sad it seems that when the good fellow — who has had such hosts of friends — goes to his grave (very often, of late, at all events, it has happened), he should be so poorly attended. Think of Brougham and of Floyd. I don't know what is to be done in Sothern's case. I've heard nothing; and, on account of a very severe cold (which I fear to aggravate while I am acting), I shall not be able to take part in the funeral, beyond visiting the house of mourning. I doubt very much if there'll be many, of all the hundreds that flocked around him in life, that will follow his corse, or think of him after to-day."

Sothern was buried in the beautiful cemetery at Southampton, on January 25. His sons, Lytton and Edward, were present, together with Sir John Rae Reid, Captain Fred Rasch, Horace Wall, and Robert Wyndham, of Edinburgh. The cable incorrectly reported the presence there of Dion Boucicault — one of Sothern's worst enemies, and one whose name was odious to him.

as "dogans." He rarely spoke of individual actors, and he never spoke of them unkindly. His opinions of acting, however, were not less definite for not being proclaimed. He saw no surprising merit in the acting of Lester Wallack, or in the style of which that capital comedian was conspicuously representative. He named Jefferson as a great comedian, and he expressed unequivocal admiration for the spontaneous, flexible acting of Ada Rehan. He declared Charles Kean, in the part of Louis the Eleventh, to be stronger than Henry Irving. He thought Clarke to be funnier in private life than in public. He saw Frederick Lemaitre, then in his decadence — as Don Cæsar de Bazan, and he was disappointed in him.[1] He enjoyed comic caricature on the stage, and he particularly liked the burlesques of his own Hamlet and Richelieu, that were presented at the Olympic, by George L. Fox.[2] The judgment of actors about

[1] In Paris he visited the Odéon, where he nearly went to sleep over an uninteresting performance; and the Comedie Française, where a representation of Augier's *L'Aventurière*, the original of Robertson's *Home*, disappointed him in the case of Mlle. Croizette and others, but greatly pleased him in the case of M. Coquelin. The most enjoyable play he saw in Paris was at the Porte St.-Martin, where he took his daughter to see a drama which he had witnessed, in company with her mother, many years before; and it is significant of the perennial character of French actresses, and the gallantry of Time toward those ladies, that Booth recognised, in the representative of the heroine, the same woman, quite unchanged, who sustained that part nearly twenty years ago. — *London Letter, by Clinton W. Stuart, January 26, 1881.*

[2] GEORGE L. FOX was a man of no intellectual power, but he was very expert in his peculiar vocation. He made clowning a fine art. His field was not high, but within it he was a chieftain. His vein of humour was real and rich. His drollery was spontaneous and irresistible. He took delight in his occupation, and therefore he had a firm grasp upon sympathy. His artistic method was sure and clear. He knew the precise value of

each other is seldom sound. They see but little acting, except it be associated with their own, and they are not in the habit of considering the subject in a broad spirit. They are fortunate, accordingly, — although they seldom know it, — in the fact that reviews of their proceedings are not generally furnished by men of their own craft. "I should be sorry," John McCullough said to me, "to be found dead, playing such a part as Louis the Eleventh."

Booth had a genial regard for Edwin L. Davenport, — long the American Hamlet, — and he several times acted with him in *Othello*, Davenport playing the Moor, and Booth playing Iago. Davenport [1816–1877], was an actor of extraordinary versatility. I have seen him act, in one evening, Shakespeare's Brutus and Roaring Ralph Stackpole, in the Indian play of *The Jibbinainosay*. He was massive and weird in Macbeth. His Duke Aranza, in *The Honeymoon*, was peerless. His D'Artagnan and St. Marc were authentic types of nobility, freely and broadly exhibited under the varying lights of humour and pathos. His Sir Giles Overreach was a sinister and grisly embodiment of worldly craft and insensate villany. His Othello was,

repose contrasted with movement. His stillness was sometimes the most vivid and humorous action, in its practical effect. By a single gesture he could flash an entire process of thought upon the beholder's comprehension. His assumption of perfect innocence, and of docile goodness that is unjustly and cruelly abused, was one of the best bits of art, and one of the funniest spectacles, that the stage has afforded. Fox's clown was not a common mummer, and he might well have said, "Mislike me not for my complexion." He enriched the harmless enjoyment of his time; he gained rank and honour by legitimate means, and he wore them with modesty and grace.

in construction, as nearly perfect as it is possible for a work of art to be. Mind, grace, force, variety, and occasional flashes of fire were characteristic of Davenport's acting. It was deficient in soul. His nature was not spiritual, and hence his otherwise excellent Hamlet was as metallic as the rapier that he carried; but it had distinct purpose and definite and adequate execution. He was proud, and justly so, of his performance of Sir Giles Overreach, and he often expressed the intention of making a specialty of that character. He told me that it would one day become as popular in his hands as Rip Van Winkle had become in those of Jefferson. He forgot that Sir Giles is abhorrent to the human heart, and, accordingly, that the better it is acted the more it will be disliked, and the more it is disliked the more it will be avoided. People can be startled, once and again, by a superb exhibition of brilliant wickedness and horror; but they cannot be charmed by it. There is, to be sure, a fascination in evil, and this, sometimes, is beautiful and potent. But it does not strike deep, and it does not endure. Humanity fears a monster, the moment it realises his presence; and what it fears it soon hates. The safety of the actor who embodies Sir Giles, Richard the Third, and Pescara is that his hearers do not apprehend his work as a fact. They see it as an illusion; and what they admire is the skill with which he converts a man into a fiend. Awful strifes of passion, and awful depths of iniquity and suffering are suggestively laid open to their view, by his art; and, he, therefore, shines out as a wonderful, dreadful sorcerer. But the honours he wears are only for a day, if he stops at that order of achievement, and

does nothing to captivate affectionate sympathy. Davenport went to his grave unsatisfied in his ambition as to Sir Giles. Everybody admired it, and everybody refrained as much as possible from seeing it. Davenport, however, was a rare actor, and to see him as William, in *Black-eyed Susan*, was to see acting of a high order. When he went to England, with Mrs. Mowatt, playing Claude Melnotte and kindred parts, the eccentric Knowles, of Manchester, said to him, after the first performance in that city, "You are the star — not Mrs. Mowatt;" and Knowles straightway commanded that Davenport's name should be starred in the bill. Wherever he went he was admired; and yet, for lack of intrinsic royalty, he missed the sceptre that at one time it seemed destined he should wield.

A contemporary whom Booth admired as an actor, and whom he valued much as a friend, was John E. Owens (1823–1886), at whose prince-like home, Aigburth Vale, near Baltimore, he was, in old times, a frequent visitor. Owens was a man of uncommon mind, sterling character, and rare personal charm, and he was a comedian of the first order. His acting was remarkable for wealth and brilliancy of animal spirits, and for richness and spontaneity of humour. While his method in art was marked by minute elaboration of details, the current of his humour suffused with rosy light the whole mechanical structure, giving it unity, warmth, and colour. He acted many parts, but was especially felicitous in Joshua Butterby and Solon Shingle. In Joshua Butterby he presented a compound of ridiculous mental vacuity, comic pertness, and absurd self-assertion. The character is unlovable; yet the

comedian commended it by the fortunate excess of his personal drollery. The element of farce, in the skilful method of Owens, was not permitted to dull the point of the fine and useful satire, nor to blur the tints of eccentric character. In *The Victims* Butterby revolves around a selfish sentimentalist, of the literary class, whose egotism has blinded his sense of duty. The theme thus exhibited is a simpleton's admiration for a moral coward; and the drift of the play is satire of the blue-stocking element in literature, combined with condemnation of sentimental imposture in the conduct of life. *The Victims* is a piece that must have exerted a thoroughly good influence — for there is nothing like the bow of humour to send home to their centre the arrows of truth and wit. In Solon Shingle Owens expended his strength upon a portraiture of eccentric character, distinctively American, and, of a certain sort, natural — even to the utmost line of literalness. The unity of that embodiment, in dress, movement, gesture, peculiarity of facial expression, vocalism and manner, was marvellous. Owens never ceased to study, and to strengthen his art. His bubbling humour kept his audience in continual delight, and few actors have given so much pleasure or left so sweet a memory.

With John S. Clarke, who married his sister Asia, Booth was associated from his youth, and he always expressed for him a great personal regard. It is the peculiarity of the fine strain of art that its charm is elusive; a charm felt rather than perceived; easy to recognise but difficult to define. The acting of John S. Clarke — who has now in a great measure withdrawn from the stage — was sincere; it was urged by a clear, firm,

propulsive purpose; it was original in character; and it was compact and pointed in style. The power that Clarke exercised, to please and captivate, to stimulate laughter and inspire affectionate liking, may, doubtless, be ascribed to temperament. He is a humourist. Life strikes his mind at the comic angle, and his constitutional methods of response to its influence are either drolly playful or downright comic. Yet, as an artist, he leaves nothing to chance, and the first implications of his acting are deep feeling and strong thought. There was no heedless, accidental quality in his art. There was neither hesitation, nor uncertainty, nor excess, nor error. The spectator was not wearied by inefficiency nor vexed by vain pretension. The spring of victory in his acting was the perfect control that he exercised over his powers, — his complete understanding of himself, his minute and thorough perception of cause and effect in stage art, and his consummate skill in deducing the one from the other. Wealth and variety of pathos and spirituality were not implied by his personations, — although, indeed, there was pathos in his acting of Bob Tyke, — but they were richly fraught with original character, drollery, intense earnestness, clear meaning distinctly revealed and unerringly projected, and the unity of texture and symmetry of form that should characterise a dramatic ideal thoroughly fashioned and adequately expressed. When Clarke came upon the stage in an assumed character he filled it, to the utmost; and he never lapsed out of it. His method was, in all things, a studied one, and though his ways were, in all things — or almost all — grotesque, each of his portrayals was distinctly individual. De Boots, Toodle, Pangloss, Waddilove, Acres, Bob Tyke,

JOSEPH JEFFERSON AND JOHN S. CLARKE
As Dr. Pangloss and Zekiel Homespun.
From original in possession of W. Winter.

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and Redmond Tape — were all different persons. There is a lasting power of conquest in the art that understands itself and goes straight to its purpose. Clarke made De Boots and Toodle, and other such eccentric characters, natural and probable human creatures, rather than figments of a grotesque fancy. As represented by him, those parts suggested a background of experience and the versimilitude of daily life. He was happy in the introduction of delicate points of business, which served to augment and more clearly define the texture of the parts, without, however, in any way changing it. He acted with the ease of second nature, that makes the observer oblivious of the effort and skill which alone could produce such effects of illusion and enjoyment. Nothing more ludicrous has been heard upon the stage than the tone in which Clarke, as De Boots, mentioned the approach of "that man who has such a lively interest in my nose," or the tone of self-opinionated complacency with which, as Toodle, the comedian said: "He went to his grave, and died there." In lace-work the most delicate threads count — and Clarke's mechanism was always lace. The period in which Booth lived was rich in manifestations of splendid talent upon the stage, especially in comedy — Mathews, Burton, Owens, Blake, Gilbert, Hackett, Burke, Jefferson, Warren, Sothern, Brougham, Buckstone, Clarke, Lewis, Toole, Rowe, Florence, Holland, Davidge, Le Moyne, Wallack, Raymond, Setchell, Stoddart, Beckett, and Mark Smith being conspicuous in the brilliant throng through which he moved, a dark, sad, stately figure, shadow-like in the sun.

Never until Henry Irving arose did Booth meet with

a rival. He had eclipsed Forrest. He had nothing to fear from either Davenport, Brooke, Murdoch, Adams, Dillon, Marshall, Wallack, Fechter, Lawrence Barrett, or John McCullough. He stood alone in the public favour, and for many years he had the realm of the tragic drama entirely at his command. He was assailed, indeed, but he was never shaken. Not till Henry Irving came to America did Booth ever have reason to understand that his star had passed its meridian and was beginning to descend. There is an inevitable fate in such changes. The great actor passes away, with his time. The celebrity, whoever he may be, is fortunate who does not linger on the scene after his period has gone. One of the sweetest of Booth's characteristics was the gentle patience, the cheerful resignation, with which he accepted the new order of things. He did not defer to the new lights of art. He did not believe in the new school. The tradition of his father and of Edmund Kean was his law. Yet, if the public was drifting away from that old faith, he was content to be left alone at its altar. He allied with himself the intellectual, indomitable Lawrence Barrett and the gentle and lovely Modjeska, and he stood fast, to the end, by the old-fashioned standard of poetic tragedy, the grand manner, the elocutionary not less than the mimetic art. But he did not wish to obtrude himself or to insist on his views. The periods of his engagements grew shorter and shorter, and little by little he relaxed his grasp upon the stage and went into retirement. The death of Lawrence Barrett, March 20, 1891, gave him a great shock and much intensified his inclination to withdraw into private life. I never heard him, however,

speak a harsh word about any actor or about the public. His day, as well he knew, had been very brilliant. He had reigned in splendour. He was willing to accept the evening twilight, when it came, and be at peace. He was on the stage for nearly forty-two years — from September 18, 1849, till April 4, 1891, — and, steadily to the last, he was the devoted, unselfish, gentle apostle of acting and of actors, and, steadily to the last, although his enthusiasm had waned and his powers had begun to fail, the community followed him with respect, and even with affectionate homage.

After his relinquishment of Booth's theatre, Booth never again participated in theatrical management. All his labours in that field were over and done with, by the time he came to forty years. During the last twenty years of his life he was simply a travelling star. He did not act continuously, but allowed himself intervals of retirement and rest, residing for the most part in New York, though for a while in Boston, but repairing now and then to a country home that he had established at Cos-Cob, not far from Stamford, Connecticut, and later to Newport. At Cos-Cob, on August 17, 1875, while driving in company with Dr. Kellogg, of the Poughkeepsie Lunatic Asylum, — author of a thoughtful and valuable treatise on the insanity of some of Shakespeare's characters, a good companion book to Dr. Connolly's exposition of the insanity of Hamlet, — he was thrown from his carriage, hurled against a telegraph pole, and severely hurt.[1] His left arm was broken and two

[1] News of that disaster reached me about midnight, at the N.Y. *Tribune*, in the form of an abrupt announcement that Booth was dead. Inquiry presently ascertained that this report was rumour. Direct commu-

of his ribs were bruised, and for several weeks he remained disabled. He recovered, however, and on October 25, 1875, he reappeared upon the stage, in the Fifth Avenue theatre, New York. The next year brought one of the most interesting episodes of his professional life, — a tour through the southern States, from which he had long been absent. That tour began at Baltimore, January 3, 1876, and ended at Bowling Green, March 3. It was guided by John T. Ford, one of the ablest theatrical managers in America, and long the leading theatrical director in the South, and it was attended with much prosperity. In Baltimore, Booth appeared fourteen times, before audiences representative of the culture and beauty of that refined city, and of the county in which he was born. In Richmond he acted seven times, and he then visited, in succession, Charlotte, Columbia, Augusta, Charleston, Savannah, Macon, Columbus, Montgomery, Atlanta,

nication with Cos-Cob was, at that hour, impossible. The anxious suspense of that night has not been forgotten. The following paragraph, written by me, appeared in the *Tribune*, the next morning: —

"It is thought that the accident to Edwin Booth may result fatally. Mr. Booth, however, is a man of strongly-knit and wiry physique, and capable of great endurance; and from this fact, and from the fact that he is of a firm, patient, resolute nature, a happier result may be anticipated. The loss of Edwin Booth would be a great, an irremediable calamity to the American stage. He is now in the meridian of his powers and his fame — ripened by a larger experience of both renown and adversity than falls to the lot of most men; and, since misfortune and success have but strengthened in him a noble devotion to what is noblest in his art, while developing and augmenting his capacities to serve its cause, it is not too much to say that around him are clustered the highest hopes of the future of our theatre. In few instances are private virtues so closely wedded to public eminence as in the case of Edwin Booth; and the community would feel, in losing him, that it had lost an exemplar, an ornament, a friend."

Chattanooga, Nashville, and Bowling Green. Fifty-two performances, in all, were given by him, the characters that he represented being Hamlet, Othello, Richelieu, Richard the Second, King Lear, Shylock, Cardinal Wolsey, Iago, and Petruchio. Booth had not acted south of Baltimore, on the Atlantic coast, since 1859, when he appeared in most of the cities named. He was therefore a novelty, and the inhabitants of the South, for many miles around the places that he was announced to visit, came in crowds to the cities in which he appeared. The hotels were thronged. Legislatures regulated their hours of meeting, with a special view to attendance upon his performances. Social parties gave precedence to the theatre. Crowds of people gathered as early as daylight, in many instances, to buy tickets. Northern citizens who chanced to be passing the winter in the South were eager applicants for places. There was a multitude at every stopping-place, to welcome the actor; and often, at way-stations, the doors of the cars had to be locked, in order to keep out the rush of spectators. No actor had ever caused such excitement, or received such a tribute, in the southern country. Booth richly repaid the welcome, — acting with such intensity and fire as he had not surpassed, even in his earlier days. His impersonation of Richard the Second was an extraordinary success — particularly in Baltimore, Richmond, Charleston, and Savannah, places in which the inhabitants have ever been exacting in their views of the acted drama. The part of Richard the Second, which, prior to his time, had long been disused, was adopted by Booth in the fall of 1875, and thereafter was made a specialty by him; and his assumption of it was in a

high degree poetical and pathetic. The stage in the South received a fresh impetus of vitality from Booth's brilliant tour, and long enjoyed the benefit of a consequent revival of dramatic interest. Booth and Ford parted at Cave City, Kentucky — the manager taking his company, of twenty-seven persons, to Baltimore. Before beginning the homeward journey the actors presented to Ford a gold cross, as a token of friendship, and to commemorate the Booth expedition. The most remunerative business of the tour was done at Nashville, Baltimore, and Atlanta. Booth's health was benefited by travel, and his spirit was much cheered by the sympathy of the southern people. On March 13 he appeared at Louisville, and on March 27 in Cincinnati. On April 6 he began an engagement at McVicker's theatre, Chicago, and while there, on April 23, he gave a special performance for the benefit of the Shakespeare Memorial, at Stratford-upon-Avon. Later — in June — he sent a personal contribution of five hundred dollars to the treasury of that institution, and the council controlling it thereupon elected him to be one of its governors.[1] In the latter part of May he gave a performance in Baltimore, to aid the ladies of Maryland in their celebration of the American centennial. He passed several weeks of the summer at Cos-Cob, Connecticut, and with his mother, at Long Branch, and late in August, 1876, he left Chicago,[2] on his journey to California — the scene

[1] In the summer of 1880 Booth visited Stratford-upon-Avon and he was received there with cordial respect and hospitality. At the birthplace of Shakespeare he was the recipient of a great compliment — being invited to write his name, "high up," upon the Actors' Pillar.

[2] Just before leaving Chicago Booth wrote as follows, to his sister, Mrs. J. S. Clarke: —

of his early trials and his first success, which he was now to see again after an absence of twenty years. He was received there with enthusiasm, and in San Francisco, where he filled an engagement of eight weeks, the receipts exceeded $96,000.

After his return from California Booth's public life flowed smoothly, in the customary channel. He had become a wandering star. On November 20, 1876, he appeared at the theatre in West Fourteenth street, New York, then called the Lyceum, under the management of J. H. McVicker, as Hamlet, and there he continued to act till January 26, 1877. *Hamlet* was acted nine times. *The Fool's Revenge*, produced November 27, received seven representations, Booth acting Bertuccio. *Richard the Second*, brought forward on December 4, was seven times repeated. *Othello*, presented on December 11, received six performances, Booth and Frederick Robinson alternating the characters of Othello and Iago. *The Merchant of Venice*, first given on December 13, was acted five times. *Richelieu* was presented December 18, and acted eight times. *Much Ado About Nothing* had two performances, December 23 and January 6—both in the morning. *Richard the Third*,

"Your letter from England, dated June 20, has just reached me. It travelled around the country, halted at the dead letter office, and has been rescued and forwarded to me here, on the eve of my departure for California. John McCullough has provided for our especial accommodation a Pullman car; we are to stop when and where we like, and are comfortably supplied with every convenience of a home. I am in good health and spirits, and disposed to take the world easily. I do not see that I have any other blessing to ask of God, excepting always His assistance to that point where I may best serve my fellow-men. I've had a dream of such a privilege being mine — the dream of many years; perhaps I shall realise it, ere I die." — That dream, no doubt, was of the Players' Club.

produced on Christmas night, was seven times represented, as was also *Brutus* — first given on New Year's night. *King Lear*, January 8, was acted four times; *The Lady of Lyons*, November 25, at a matinée, thrice. *The Stranger* was performed on December 2, at a matinée, and on January 20. *Don Cæsar de Bazan* was given on December 9 and January 26. *Ruy Blas*, produced at a matinée, December 30, was acted four times. *The Taming of the Shrew*, January 11, received three performances. Fifteen pieces were presented, and Booth was seen as Hamlet, Claude Melnotte, Bertuccio, The Stranger, Richard the Second, Don Cæsar de Bazan, Othello, Iago, Shylock, Richelieu, Benedick, Richard the Third, Ruy Blas, Brutus, King Lear, and Petruchio. That mention indicates the general character of the engagements that he filled at this time and during the rest of his career. Clara Jennings acted, with competent ability, the leading female characters in those plays. McVicker was seen as Dogberry, Peter, and the First Grave-digger. Booth's season began in prosperity; but, in common with other theatrical enterprises of that day, it was seriously damaged by the consequences of the fatal burning of the Brooklyn theatre. The receipts did not exceed $50,000. Booth's acting — while on certain nights, when depressed in spirits, he somewhat disappointed the spectator, by lack of power and fire — showed imagination, a strong grasp of Shakespearian ideals, and the repose of consummate dramatic art. In Hamlet, Iago, Richelieu, Richard the Second, Bertuccio, and the lurid parts of Brutus, Booth certainly was one of the first tragedians of the world. Those works were unique. They

embellished the stage. They impressed and charmed the best intellect and taste of the age; and they preserve his name in a just renown.

Booth in his time played many parts, but his usual repertory, after his reputation became established, included seventeen characters: Hamlet, Richelieu, Iago, Bertuccio, King Lear, Shylock, Richard the Second, Richard the Third, Cardinal Wolsey, Macbeth, Othello, Marcus Brutus, Lucius Brutus, Benedick, Petruchio, Ruy Blas, and Don Cæsar de Bazan. In addition to those parts he also sometimes acted Sir Giles Overreach, Sir Edward Mortimer, Pescara, Claude Melnotte, and The Stranger. He was always desirous of obtaining new plays, but he did not want tragedies. He felt the need of relief from the tension and strain of tragic characters, and he said that the style of a tragedian is lightened, and made more flexible and natural, by the habit of acting now and then in comedy. He read many manuscripts of new plays that were offered to him, but he seldom or never found a piece that he could practically adopt. A tragedy on the subject of *Henry the Second*, written by Messrs. Hollister and Champlin, pleased him much, and came near to being a success on the stage. That piece he produced at New Orleans, in the season of 1859–60. One scene of it, in which King Henry, at the council board, seizes a battle-axe, and in one of those tempests of passion for which the fiery Plantaganet, in actual life, was notorious, aims to strike down the offending Becket, he much admired, saying that it was almost as effective as the somewhat similar scene, of the condemnation of Hastings, in Shakespeare's tragedy of *Richard the Third*. He pro-

duced at the Boston theatre a romantic drama by Edmund Falconer, called *Love's Ordeal*, appearing in it as Eugene de Morny, but he soon discarded it. He was an interesting actor in romantic drama, but his greatness was that of the tragedian. In 1877, acting upon a suggestion made by me, — that measures should be taken to preserve a record of his stage-business in the various parts, — he carefully cut and arranged the text of fifteen of the plays in his repertory, inserting many stage-directions, and those pieces were published, with my introductions and notes, under the name of *The Prompt Book*. They are an authentic memorial to Booth's practical knowledge of his profession, and to his scholarship, judgment, taste, and artistic method. The first of them was *Richard the Third*. Booth restored the original text of that tragedy, and acted it according to Shakespeare, in 1876. His version is adapted, but, aside from two or three phrases, it does not contain a line that is not in the original piece. The public, however, has always preferred Cibber's *Richard*, and probably always will. The other books of Booth's series are *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Richard the Second*, *Henry the Eighth*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Katherine and Petruchio*, *Richelieu*, *The Fool's Revenge*, *Brutus*, *Ruy Blas*, and *Don Cæsar de Bazan*. The intention was that each play-book should contain all the aids that are essential for the production of the play. Twenty years earlier Booth had begun the arrangement of the text of some of the stock plays, and in the Winter Garden time he had printed several of them, under the supervision of Henry L. Hinton, a young actor in his company; those books he discarded.

BOOTH AS HAMLET.

As a manager Booth, incidentally, produced Arthur Matthison's play on Tennyson's poem of *Enoch Arden*, and likewise a tragic piece entitled *Jonquil, or Only a Heart*, by William Young. The latter piece was brought out at Booth's theatre, April 15, 1871. It is in four acts, and the scene is Paris. The hero is a poor artist; the heroine a dancing girl. These two marry, and the wife repudiates the husband and breaks his heart. The situations are effective. The piece resembles *Belphegor* and the *Marble Heart* — showing the evil that may be wrought by a fickle or a cruel woman. Lawrence Barrett played Jonquil. Neither of those plays has survived. Booth also reproduced in America the drama of *Time and Tide*, by Palgrave Simpson.

Prominent and influential actors are customarily reproached because they do not exhibit an eager alacrity in the production of new plays. The reproach is unjust. New plays, as a rule, should be thrown into the fire. The good new play is the rare exception. Almost every man who can write anything believes that he can write a play. The late Lester Wallack once asked me why I had not written a comedy for him, and when, in reply, I told him that I did not pretend to be a writer of plays, he said, with a smile: "You are the only man of letters that ever made me that answer." I asked him, thereupon, what answer he had generally received. "Writers always say," he declared, "that they don't write comedies for me, because the taste of the public is so low that nothing good would be appreciated." The delusion that if a man is a writer he can write a play as readily as he can write anything else is widely prevalent; and yet not one writer in a thousand possesses

the peculiar talent and exceptional impulse that are essential for that species of composition. When Lord Byron became a director of Drury Lane theatre, — an office that he held for a short time in 1815, — he heard the same complaint that is made now, the complaint that good dramatists receive no practical encouragement; and he caused an examination to be made, and he participated in it, of the manuscript plays that were then in the Drury Lane library. They numbered about five hundred. "I do not think," he subsequently wrote, in his *Detached Thoughts*, "that of those which I saw there was one which could be conscientiously tolerated. There never were such things as most of them." Similar research, in our time, reaches a similar conclusion. The acted drama has existed in the United States of America for about one hundred and fifty years; yet it would be difficult, if not impossible, to name as many as forty persons, among American authors, who, in the course of all that time, have written good plays. The reason is simple. Writers think only, or chiefly, of the shaping of their thoughts into felicitous words. Even so great a writer as Thackeray, whose story of *Lovel the Widower* was originally written as a play, failed in his endeavour to employ the dramatic form. That form was not natural to him; it was not his appropriate instrument. The essence of a play is action. The drama must, first, address the eye; afterward, the ear. Examination of the structure of the great plays of Shakespeare reveals the fact that the movement of them could proceed without language. The most dramatic of them is *Othello*, and in that the celerity, harmony, and cumulative force of the movement are marvellous.

Words are essential; and in Shakespeare's plays they are often precious beyond expression; but, for the purposes of the stage, dramatic vitality is more essential than words. If leading actors, like Booth, were in the habit of rejecting good plays, their course would be open to censure. Their rejection of rubbish ought to inspire public gratitude.

In 1880 Booth fulfilled a project which for some time he had entertained, of making a visit to Europe. A banquet in his honour occurred in New York, at Delmonico's, on June 15, 1880, — at which speeches were delivered by John R. Brady, Rev. Robert Collyer, Lawrence Barrett, Lester Wallack, Joseph Jefferson, Rev. F. C. Ewer, William Warren, Whitelaw Reid, E. C. Stedman, Charles P. Daly, Algernon S. Sullivan, Noah Brooks, Horace Porter, George Shea, W. S. Andrews, and Parke Godwin, and a poem was read by the present writer, — and on June 30, accompanied by his wife and daughter, he sailed for England. Arrangements for his appearance in London had not been made; but, under the guidance of John S. Clarke, a contract was soon effected, and after a visit to Stratford-upon-Avon and a summer tour in Switzerland, including a disappointing view of the *Passion Play* at Oberammergau, Booth appeared, on November 6, at the new Princess's theatre, under the management of Messrs. Walter Gooch and Henry Jackson, as Hamlet. The choice of that part, advised and strongly urged by Mrs. Booth, was not, perhaps, judicious, since it seemed to challenge comparison with the reigning favourite of the London stage, Henry Irving. Booth was apprised that the newspapers in general would be hostile to him,

and the anticipation of harsh treatment thereupon made him stern and cold. He told me afterward that his embodiment of Hamlet, on the opening night of that London season, was the most inflexible performance that he ever gave. Doubtless, however, he exaggerated the hardness of the impersonation, for by many competent judges among the English it was much admired. The cautious and gelid manner commonly adopted by the London press, and sometimes carried to a ludicrous extreme, is not always accompanied by either depth of thought, wisdom of judgment, or sincerity of feeling. Some of the London journals talked down to Booth from an Olympian height which they had not previously been supposed to occupy. In the main, however, he was received with honour. Many pages might be filled with tributes from the newspapers. Booth's embodiments of Richelieu, Bertuccio, Iago, and Lear elicited public sympathy and enthusiastic favour. Lear was produced on February 14, 1881. Booth was recalled after each act, and three times after the scene of the recognition of Cordelia, — a passage in which his acting probably has not been excelled. In Lear he was at his best of passion and pathos, and but that he had fascinated his public with Hamlet and Richelieu, that embodiment would have been regarded as the greatest of his works. He surpassed his father in that part, and his father, according to Hazlitt, surpassed, in Lear, that writer's idol, Edmund Kean. When Booth, as a young man, first acted Lear he presented the Tate version, which, as modified by John Philip Kemble, had long been in common use. Subsequently he discarded that version, and for upwards of ten years he left the

piece untouched, in order that he might forget Tate. That done, he reverted to the great tragedy, and produced it [at Chicago, in October, 1870, for the first time] as it stands in Shakespeare.[1] Among the famous Englishmen who saw Booth's performance of it, at the Princess's, were Dean Stanley, Charles Reade, and Tennyson. The poet saw it on March 7, and invited the actor to dine with him the next day. "Most interesting, most touching and powerful," said Tennyson, speaking to Booth at dinner, "but not a bit like Lear." Booth's acting version of the tragedy, on the other hand, was declared by the *Spectator* to be "far more clear and cogent than the original play," and Booth's embodiment was designated, by the *Academy*, "a profound study of mental condition incident upon old age

[1] Booth's first impersonation in New York of Shakespeare's Lear was given at the Fifth Avenue theatre, on November 16, 1875, and the following record of it was made by me, in the *Tribune* of the next day: —

"The night was wet and bleak, but the house was crowded, and Booth's impersonation of the majestic and awful part of Lear was seen, with eager attention, by a crowd of sympathetic spectators, often thrilled by his magnetic fire, and often lifted out of ordinary composure by his melting pathos. The performance was uneven, and it has room to grow; but it will be recognised, in the coming on of time, as one of the greatest of Booth's achievements. He wrought the loftiest effects with the frenzy of the monarch, at the close of act second, with the scene of the recognition of Cordelia, and with the death scene. He expressed, with extraordinary truth and power, the old man's dread of impending insanity, the helplessness of breaking age, and the outraged tenderness of paternal love. A more afflicting image of miserable age and shattered royalty — not of name and office merely, but of nature — has not been seen on the stage than Booth presented, in the awakening of Lear and his recognition of Cordelia. In certain particulars he disappointed — seeming to possess the part, not seeming to be possessed by it. He lacked massiveness in the earlier scenes, and his brain was too compact in others. Booth was called out at the end of every act, and twice at the end of act fourth."

and the long habit of authority still half retained when it should be wholly laid aside." The *Era*, in an article from the competent pen of E. L. Blanchard, said that "in the mad scenes of the fourth act; in the communings with poor Tom, the philosopher; in the keen satire at the expense of those who are supposed to administer justice; and in the joyful recognition of the returned Cordelia, and in the grief which, with her untimely death, brings the king's crowning sorrow and calls him from a wicked world, Booth's delivery and acting were superb: and we are disposed to say that nothing finer of the kind has been known upon the English stage." Similar testimony was borne by the experienced and accomplished Sala, in the *Illustrated London News*. "Among the touches of pure art," said that writer, "the most conspicuous were the passages in which Lear expressed, not only by words, but by mien and gesture, his miserable consciousness that he was tottering on the narrow border line between reason and unreason. The despairing persuasion that he was going mad, his piteous admission that he might not be altogether in his right mind, his abandonment of delirium, his strange foregatherings and mutterings and moanings, with the simulated Tom o' Bedlam; Lear's restoration to reason, and his exquisite, pathetic recognition of Cordelia, with his final agonised lament over her dead body, were all rendered with astonishing truth, nerve, and absence of exaggeration. In his earlier scenes with the Fool I hold him to be fully equal to Macready."

A letter from Booth, during the run of that tragedy, indicates its reactionary effect upon himself, in the dis-

tressing circumstances under which he was obliged to continue acting. "The strain of Lear every night," he wrote, "is in itself enough to drain the life of a stronger man than I; but add to this the anxiety on Mary's account, and loss of sleep, and you may guess how *sane* I am. I sometimes feel as though my brain were tottering on the verge. Perhaps acting mad every night has something to do with it. I once read of a French actress who went mad after a continued run of an insane character she personated." At another time, adverting to his art, Booth said: "When I am enrapt in a character I am personating there seems to be another and a distinct individuality, another *me*, sitting in judgment on myself."

The first engagement at the Princess's, — lasting one hundred and nineteen nights, — closed on March 26, with Shylock and Petruchio. Booth, however, had formed the plan of giving a series of Morning Performances in London, to include a round of parts, and he now proposed to Henry Irving that those performances should occur at the Lyceum theatre. Irving at once accepted that proposal, but a little later suggested a combination between Booth and himself, with the purpose of presenting *Othello*, and alternating the characters of Othello and Iago — the performances to be given at night. That plan, conceived by Irving, and suggested in a spirit of rare and fine generosity, was adopted, and on May 2, 1881, Booth made his first appearance at the Lyceum theatre, performing Othello.[1]

[1] "There was at the Lyceum" — so wrote a careful and conscientious observer, Mr. Joseph Hatton — "a thoroughly representative assemblage, with the addition of an extra amount of electricity in the atmosphere.

Irving was Iago — which he played for the first time in his life. The matchless Ellen Terry embodied Desdemona. The picturesque William Terriss assumed Cassio. Mead, with his sonorous and superb voice, presented Brabantio. Mrs. Pauncefort appeared as Emilia, and Mr. Pinero as Roderigo. The engagement was for three performances a week, and it was to last a month. More than £4000 had been received at the Lyceum, in advance, for tickets, prior to the opening night. The success of the venture was great. The

The gallery seemed crowded unto overflowing, the front being packed with human beings. In the upper circles, between the pit and the gallery, were many of the distinguished people you expect to find in the stalls; but the prices had been doubled, and they therefore occupied seats which it is not considered *infra dig.* to occupy at the Italian opera. The stalls and boxes were full of well-known people, including all the leading critics, many of the usual habitués of the house, and some eminent citizens of the United States. Baroness Burdett-Coutts occupied her usual box, with her husband and a party. In another box were Miss Booth, Mrs. J. S. Clarke, and Miss Clarke. On the opposite side were the American Minister and Consul-General Hoppin. In the stalls were Mr. McHenry, Dr. Critchett, Mr. and Mrs. Sala, Mr. and Mrs. George Lewis, Mrs. Keeley, the famous actress, a girlish young lady of about eighty, Chevalier Wykoff, Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham, formerly of the Edinburgh theatre; Mr. and Mrs. Michael Gunn, of Dublin; Mr. and Mrs. Saville Clarke; Lady Hardy and Miss Hardy; Mr. Mowbray Morris, of the *Times;* Mr. Clement Scott; Mr. and Mrs. Comyns Carr; Professor Tyndall; Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Boughton, and many others. Irving was picturesque, as a Venetian gallant and soldier should be; as gay in banter, and in the drinking scene with Cassio, as the situations require. In the Cyprian incident of Desdemona's graciousness to Cassio he made his short reflective speeches while he leaned against a vine-clad archway, plucking and eating the grapes, as he watches and notes, and engenders the plot against his comrade Cassio and his chief the Moor. The reading of Iago was full of fresh and ingenious interpretation; and the character stood out clear-cut and original, a revelation alike of the poet's conception and the actor's power."

Morning Post of May 3 said: "Booth's Othello, while possessing all the beauty and finish it formerly exhibited, has more concentration, more force, and more balance. Irving's Iago was one of his finest performances. In the great scene of the temptation, Booth and Irving afforded each other admirable support. A triumph more undisputed theatrical annals do not record."

Irving, in acting Iago, adopted or hit upon the felicitous treatment that Booth had long employed in the dark-street scene, where Cassio is set upon by Roderigo and stealthily wounded by Iago. *The London Times*, impressed by the novelty of the proceeding, commended it, as "singularly happy," in the following words: —

> "It is in the last scene of the fourth act, a narrow, dimly-lighted street, made darker yet by the tall houses that close it in. Roderigo lies dead upon the ground, and Cassio wounded and alone with his deadliest foe. As the scene is here played, no others are with the two. The night is dark, and the town very silent. As Iago bends over the wounded man the thought flashes across him, Why not get rid of the two at one happy stroke? and with the thought he raises his sword. Another moment and Cassio is gone to join Roderigo, but, ere the moment can pass, the called-for succour comes, and the murderer's hand is stayed. Whether there be warrant for this in any of the texts we know not, but the effect is very fine."

The effect is very fine, but that business was original with Edwin Booth; was long ago and always done by him; and there is no record that it was done upon the stage prior to his time.

The engagement at the Lyceum ended on June 19. On the last night of that remarkable season Booth addressed to the public these farewell words, which are

significant, as showing the spirit with which he was animated, in his relations with the London public: —

"It is, to me, a strange sensation to speak any other words than those set down for me. Yet I feel that I cannot let an occasion like the present pass without breaking the silence. It is a pleasant duty to acknowledge to you the gratification it has been to me to see, nightly, such splendid audiences as have here assembled. I feel that I owe you a debt of gratitude for your appreciation of my efforts to please you. My visit to the Lyceum has been an uninterrupted pleasure. I have to thank my friend, Mr. Irving, for his generous hospitality, and the talented lady with whom I have had the honour of playing, for her pleasant companionship and kind assistance. Indeed, to all on the stage, and all associated with the Lyceum theatre, my best thanks, for the courtesy and consideration which I have received, are due, and are most heartily tendered. Believe me, the kind and generous treatment I have received, from the gentlemen of the press, and from all with whom I have been associated during this engagement, and the generous reception I have met with at your hands, must ever be among the pleasantest recollections of my long professional career. I hope to have the pleasure of appearing before you again, at no distant day. In the meantime I thank you most heartily, and bid you, for the present, adieu."

In a letter written to me at that time, with reference to his London Lyceum engagement, Booth said: "Its success is very great, in all respects, and only my domestic misery prevents it from being the happiest theatrical experience I have ever had. I wish I could do as much for Henry Irving, in America, as he has done here for me."

The domestic misery was the illness of Mrs. Booth, which had advanced rapidly, depleting her strength, and almost subduing a marvellous power of endurance and will. Her return home was deemed essential, and

Booth therefore abandoned his purpose of making a tour of the British provincial theatres in the fall of 1881, and sailed with her for New York, arriving there at the end of June, after an absence of one year.

"I never was received more heartily in my life," he said, to a representative of the *New York Times*, "than by the audiences drawn together when I played in London. I have had a most delightful experience, socially, professionally, and in every respect, with the exception of the unfortunate illness of my wife. But for that I should still be among the many friends whom I have made in England. I left New York just one year ago to-day, the last Wednesday in June, and I then intended to remain abroad at least two years. I had made my arrangements for a provincial tour, my company was engaged, and I was to start through the provinces as soon as I finished my engagement with Irving; but Mrs. Booth's illness obliged me to give up all my plans. It was a hard struggle for me to play, knowing that she was sick, and liable to die at any moment, and that fact placed me under a great disadvantage on the stage. But I laboured hard to forget my troubles, when I entered the theatre, and, considering everything against me, I think that I did fairly well. From the first night of my appearance to the last my audiences were full of enthusiasm, and during my stay abroad I was overwhelmed with courtesies. On all hands I was treated with kindness. Even the critics, I am inclined to think, treated me with fairness. At first they seemed a little disposed to 'damn with faint praise,' but on the whole they evinced a very kindly spirit toward me. My engagement with Irving was one of the most agreeable that I ever played. He is one of the most delightful men I ever met; always obliging, and always kind in every possible way. He is very popular in London, both socially and professionally, and, I think, deservedly so. He is a very superior actor, and is gifted with a remarkable talent for stage management — two qualifications for the stage which are seldom found united in the same person. Irving, with all his popularity, is a very modest man, and altogether charming, and if he visits America he will be liked no less for his qualities as a man than for his powers as a great actor."

After his return from England in 1881, Booth resided at the Windsor hotel and elsewhere in New York, and made frequent visits to his mother, at Long Branch; to his old and attached friend, E. C. Benedict, at Greenwich, Connecticut; and to his relative, J. H. Magonigle, at Mount Vernon. The dramatic season of 1881–82 he passed in America, beginning it on October 3 at Booth's theatre, New York. The fatal end of Mrs. Booth's illness has already been recorded. Domestic dissension augmented and embittered the sorrow of that sad time. On a memorable day of storm and darkness Booth followed the body of his wife to the grave, in Chicago, accompanied by his daughter and by Mr. Laurence Hutton and the present biographer; and so ended one of the most mournful chapters in his history. His wanderings that year carried him far and wide. On May 31, 1882, he again sailed for England, — accompanied by his daughter and by their physician, Dr. St. Clair Smith, — and on June 26 he began his second season at the Princess's theatre, which was devoted to *Richelieu* and *The Fool's Revenge*, and which ended on August 5. Once, on August 3, for the benefit of Wynn Miller, his manager, Booth gave a performance of *Don Cæsar de Bazan*, which was hailed by the press as a work of singular brilliancy. Booth's gain in that London venture was considerable, particularly by performances given at a house associated with melodrama, and toward the close of the London season; and he expressed himself to me with great warmth, as to the sympathy and kindness of his London audiences. In August he went into Switzerland, with his daughter, and, on returning to England, entered upon the fulfil-

ment of a series of provincial engagements which had been interrupted, in 1881, by domestic affliction. He appeared at Sheffield, September 11, remaining there a week, and acting Richelieu, Hamlet, Othello, and Bertuccio. His tour was conducted according to the subjoined plan: —

Sept.	11–16.	Theatre Royal,	Sheffield.	6 Nights.
"	18.	" "	York.	1 "
"	19–22.	Londesboro' theatre,	Scarborough.	4 "
"	23.	Spa rooms,	Harrowgate.	1 "
"	25–30.	Theatre Royal,	Newcastle.	6 "
Oct.	2–4.	" "	Dundee.	3 "
"	5–7.	" "	Aberdeen.	3 "
"	9–14.	Gaiety theatre,	Glasgow.	6 "
"	16–21.	Theatre Royal,	Edinburgh.	6 "
"	23–28.	" "	Hull.	6 "
"	30–Nov. 4.	Grand theatre,	Leeds.	6 "
Nov.	6–18.	Gaiety "	Dublin.	12 "
"	20–25.	Prince's "	Manchester.	6 "
Nov.	27–Dec. 9.	Alexandra "	Liverpool.	12 "
Dec.	11–16.	Theatre Royal,	Birmingham.	6 "

Booth's English company included Mr. and Mrs. Pateman, Mrs. Billington, Samuel Fisher, J. G. Shore, E. H. Brooke, Lin Rayne, H. George, E. Price, Ellen Meyrick (now Mrs. Frederick Burgess[1]) as leading lady, Kate Neville, and Leslie Bell. At York he had an ovation,

[1] As this book is passing through the press, August 1893, I hear of the death of Frederick Burgess. He was the manager of the Moore & Burgess Minstrels, at St. James's Hall, London. He was a man of fine abilities and exceptional gentleness. He had a wide knowledge of men and books, and his life was adorned by many acts of kindness and grace. He possessed one of the amplest and richest libraries in England. His collection of Garrick and Kean relics was extraordinary. His home, Burgess Hall, at Finchley, where he loved to assemble hosts of friends, and at which Edwin Booth was an honoured guest, was a place as delightful

and at Scarborough, which was crowded with fashionable visitors, the excitement aroused by his acting was great. On Sunday, September 17, Booth drove to Chatsworth, and visited the beautiful country-seat of the Duke of Devonshire, going also to the grave of Lord Frederick Cavendish, — murdered by Irish ruffians in Dublin, May 1882, — whose remains were laid in Edensor churchyard, in the park of Chatsworth. From Scarborough he went to Harrowgate and thence to Newcastle, where his first house was light, but on each succeeding evening the theatre was crowded. He then gave a week to Dundee and Aberdeen, at double prices, and in both those cities his success made a feast for the populace. The theatre was crowded each night; hundreds of persons had to be turned away; and when, on Sunday, October 8, he left Aberdeen, the railway station was crowded with spectators, who had come to give him a farewell greeting. The next city was Glasgow, where also Booth had a week of excellent business. Thence he went to Edinburgh; and there, as at Aberdeen and Dundee, the audience rose and cheered him at the end of his performances. For Scotland, indeed, the enthusiasm over Booth was extraordinary. An accident occurred to him at Dundee, where, in the combat scene in *Hamlet*, he was stabbed in the right arm by the sword of Laertes. The next night, acting in *The Fool's Revenge*, he still further injured his wounded arm, in his fall, so that for several nights he could not use it.

as hospitality, taste, and every appliance of culture and refinement could make it. He was eccentric and reticent, but he was deeply appreciative and full of sensibility and goodness; and as King Charles the Second said, of the poet Cowley, "he has not left a better man in England."

At Hull, on the last night of his appearance, more than a thousand persons paid for admission to the pit. In Leeds the tragedian had a good week, notwithstanding that he followed the exceedingly popular opera company of Carl Rosa, and that a heavy rain prevailed most of the time. Booth crossed, on Sunday, November 5, from Holyhead to Kingstown, having a distressingly rough voyage, and on November 6, appeared in Dublin, to a crowded house. In that capital the welcome accorded to him was enthusiastic. His Richelieu was greatly admired. His Hamlet was viewed with more critical eyes, and was lessened by comparison with the performances of Henry Irving and Barry Sullivan, long favourites in Dublin. His Bertuccio, however, was deemed magnificent. He acted with uncommon vigour, and wherever he appeared the local managers requested him to make a return visit.

Christmas, 1882, Booth passed at Morley's hotel, London, that cosy hermitage in the very centre of the world. He had seen Irving's production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, at the Lyceum, and of that he wrote to me, saying: "*Much Ado* is superbly 'staged' and finely acted. Irving's ideal and treatment of the hero are excellent, and Miss Ellen Terry's Beatrice is perfect — save for a little lack of power in the great scene with Benedick. The scenery and 'sets' are the finest I ever saw. . . ." Booth left London on December 27, and went directly to Berlin. His engagement there, at the Residenz theatre, began on January 11, 1883, and was renewed on January 23, for twelve additional performances. He appeared there as Hamlet, King Lear, and Iago. The death of Prince Charles, which put the

German Court into mourning, somewhat impaired the pleasure of the engagement. The Crown Prince and Princess had several times attended the theatre, to see Booth, and had manifested a deep interest in his performances; and it was expected that "a command" would be given for him to act before the Emperor. The Crown Prince, indeed, expressed the wish that this should occur. Those royal honours are important and influential at the capital of an empire; and it is pleasant for Booth's countrymen to remember that their representative tragedian was thus graciously received. On the first night of his Lear the leaders of Berlin society were present, excepting only those whom etiquette compelled to observe Court mourning. The Press of Berlin bore eloquent testimony to the affluent vigour and delicate and polished art of his acting. Before leaving Berlin he gave a performance for the benefit of the Widows' and Orphans' Fund, of the Berlin Press Association. At the close of the Berlin engagement his German professional associates presented to him, as a token of friendship and admiration, a wreath made of laurel leaves, of dead silver, interspersed with polished silver berries, and bound by a silver ribbon, the folds of which bear the following inscription: "To Mr. Edwin Booth, the unrivalled tragedian, in kind remembrance of his first engagement in Germany, January and February 1883. Presented by the Directors and ladies and gentlemen of the Residenz theatre, Berlin." The wreath is mounted on a cushion of pale-blue velvet trimmed with white cord. It was presented to Booth, upon the stage of the Residenz theatre, on February 11, a member of the dramatic company delivering, in English, the subjoined address: —

"Mr. Booth: On behalf of our Director, Herr Neumann, and the ladies and gentlemen who have had the honour of supporting you during your stay in Berlin, I am desired to say a few words. We congratulate ourselves upon the happy train of circumstances that induced you to appear at the Residenz theatre. We feel that, for the last month, we have sat at the feet of the greatest master of that art of which we are all humble but aspiring students, and we cannot let you leave us without thanking you sincerely for the instruction we have received. Not alone for your artistic genius will you be affectionately remembered. Your kind assistance to us in our efforts to support you to the best of our ability will ever be remembered, — and regard for the man will go hand in hand with admiration for the artist. I have now to beg your acceptance of this wreath, as a souvenir of your first German engagement. We trust that we shall have the pleasure of seeing you again in our city, where you may always be sure of a cordial welcome, both before and behind the curtain."

During his tour of Germany, Booth was compelled to make unusual exertions, since he had to appear with a new company of German actors in each of the cities that he visited. On February 22 he ended an engagement at Hamburg. A branch of silver bay-leaves was presented to him upon the stage, that night, by the actors of the Hamburg theatre, and Herr Formes delivered to him a graceful speech, in English. He then went to Bremen, where he acted five times, to crowded houses, as Hamlet, Lear, and Othello. On March 9 he made his entrance at Hanover, and acted Othello, before an enthusiastic multitude. On March 18, 19, 20, and 21 he performed at Leipsic, appearing as Hamlet, Othello, and Lear. He paused on his journey, but did not act, at Dresden and at Prague, on the road to Vienna; and he was compelled, by other engagements, to decline invitations to act at Coburg

and at Weimar. At Vienna he appeared in the Stadt theatre, March 30, and attracted and pleased great crowds of the inhabitants. The season ended on April 7, in that city.[1] Booth's tour was successful beyond precedent in Germany.[2] Wynn Miller, who conducted the business of the expedition, manifested judgment, taste, and energy. Booth had excellent health and was cheered by precisely the kind of recognition that he most valued, — so that, at the last, he was only slightly fatigued, notwithstanding the great and continuous efforts he had been obliged to make, and the heavy responsibility incident to his difficult and delicate venture, on a foreign stage and before an audience unacquainted with his language. There was no element of fashion, caprice, accident, or mountebank advertisement in the success of Booth. His natural endowments, simple individuality, steadfast endurance, patience, labour, and high purpose made him what he was. He stood at the head of his profession by virtue of genius,

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personal power, scholarship, and genuine and splendid achievement; and his influence upon the dramatic art, wherever exerted, was an influence for good. This was deeply felt abroad, and the tragedian was urged to prolong his wanderings, and to act in Italy, Spain, France, and Russia; but he was tired of travel, and preferred to return home. He came back in June 1883, and, declining a public reception, repaired to his home at Newport, where he passed the summer.

The visit that Booth made to Germany was one of the most delightful episodes of his life. He greatly enjoyed it, and he cherished the recollection of it, and often spoke of it with pleasure. A distinguished German actor, to whom he had shown much kindness in New York, and who strongly urged him to visit Germany, and especially to play *Richelieu* there, had hastened home and brought out a German translation of *Richelieu*, in order that it might not, upon Booth's arrival, affect the German public as a novelty: but that was the only inauspicious incident of the expedition.

Booth never again went abroad. The last ten years of his life were passed in intermittent professional occupation, and in peaceful domestic and social experience. On November 5, 1883, he resumed acting, at the Globe theatre, Boston, and he remained in active publicity until April 5, 1884, visiting New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. On November 17, 1884, he appeared at the Boston Museum, and from that date, until April 18, 1885, making a tour of the country, he acted under the management of Montgomery Field, the accomplished director of that theatre. On May 7, 1885, a memorable representation of *Macbeth* occurred

in New York, at the Academy of Music, Lady Macbeth being presented by Mme. Ristori, and Macbeth by Booth. He had established his residence at No. 29 Chestnut street, Boston — in a quaint house, which is now a school for girls — and there, on May 16, 1885, his daughter, Edwina, was married to Mr. Ignatius R. Grossman. The season of 1885–86 began on November 23, in Brooklyn, and, with an intermission of one month, continued during fourteen weeks. Only a few places were visited. The season of 1886–87 began on September 13, 1886, at Buffalo, and was a season of extended travel. In the course of it Booth appeared at Minneapolis and St. Paul, Wisconsin, and his receipts for one week, divided between those two cities, exceeded $18,000. It was remembered, as significant of the rapid growth of new western settlements, that at about the time of Booth's first appearance on the stage (1849), savage Indians made an attack on a little, lonely fort of logs, which stood on the site now occupied by the Merchants' hotel, in St. Paul, and that the building of Minneapolis did not begin till eight years later. In 1887 Booth formed a professional alliance with that admired actor, Lawrence Barrett, his tried and devoted comrade, who became his manager. The plan had been suggested by Barrett; it was based equally upon personal regard and professional interest, and it proved exceedingly fortunate. The first Booth and Barrett season, lasting forty weeks, began on September 13, 1887, at Buffalo, with a production of *Julius Cæsar*. The dramatic company comprised Edward J. Buckley, Benjamin G. Rogers, Owen Fawcett, John A. Lane, P. H. Hanford, Minna Gale, Gertrude Kellogg, Elizabeth

Robins, and others. The repertory included *Julius Cæsar, Othello, Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear, The Merchant of Venice, Katherine and Petruchio* (*The Taming of the Shrew*), *The Fool's Revenge, Don Cæsar de Bazan, The King's Pleasure, and David Garrick.* Booth acted Brutus, Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, Shylock, Petruchio, Bertuccio, and Don Cæsar. Barrett acted Cassius, Laertes, Macduff, Edgar, Bassanio, Gringoire, and Garrick. Othello and Iago were alternated. This combination of forces was everywhere hailed with delight, and until the sudden, untimely, and deeply lamented death of Barrett, March 20, 1891, it steadfastly prospered and pleased. The two actors were kindred in spirit, in love of art and beauty, and in devoted ambition. They had often been associated in the past, and they possessed many memories in common. Barrett, in social hours, was by turns earnest and playful. He understood the peculiar temperament of Booth — his pensive melancholy and his occasional grim reticence — and he could humour it; and he possessed, for practical public affairs, administrative ability of the first order. Booth disliked rehearsals and methodical business,[1] nor was it ever easy for him to keep his attention concentrated upon any one subject for any great length of time. Barrett's executive efficiency proved of great service, and Booth was cheered, likewise, by his companionship.[2] In every

[1] "Dates and the order of events in regular sequence are among my impossibilities." — MS. NOTE BY E. B., February 18, 1876.

[2] Some of their experiences were comic, and both actors were delightfully humorous when recounting their adventures. In November 1887, they opened, under extraordinary circumstances, a new opera house, in Kansas City. The roof was not on, and *Othello* was played in one scene, boxed to keep out the wind. The actual moon was visible. The audience,

way that was a happy alliance. There came, indeed, a time when Booth's powers began to wane. It was while travelling and acting with Barrett that he had the first stroke of dangerous illness — a paralysis, caused by smoking tobacco, affecting his articulation — which befell him at Rochester, New York, on April 3, 1889. Yet almost till the last his acting retained vestiges of power, and steadfastly till the last it retained its charm of intrinsic nobility and fine distinction. In the season of 1889–90 Mme. Modjeska was associated with Booth, and the allurement of his performances was much enhanced by the fine spirit and delicate art of that lovely actress. Mme. Modjeska appeared in Portia, Ophelia, Cordelia, Desdemona, Lady Macbeth, and other characters, and augmented her substantial fame.

Mme. Modjeska was noble in Portia, — her action and demeanour being charged with sweet dignity and sparkling variety. The sentiment of the character was emphasised by her, rather than the playful mirth of it, and she was more convincing in its serious moments than in its raillery and banter. That Portia is a woman very much in love, whose passion is to reveal itself through her careless elegance and cheery grace of manner, no actress except Ellen Terry has indicated. The Portias reserve themselves for the trial scene, and release their whole weight in the oration on mercy. Mme. Modjeska was appropriately eloquent and touching at that point, and she was pleasing from first to last. The acting of Mme. Modjeska diffused at all times the charm of fine intelligence and gentle sensi-

shivering with cold, wore hats and overcoats, but the spectators were good-natured and accepted the performance in hearty kindness.

bility, and of a subtle, expressive mechanism, guided with definite purpose and impelled with unerring skill. There are characters that stir the springs of feeling in her nature more deeply than Portia stirs them; that seem more real to her mind and are made more real in her treatment. But all that she did, in her professional association with Booth, was interesting, because it was marked with enticing personality and dramatic force.

Booth had great misfortunes and troubles, yet he was usually lucky. Things often happened well for him, — at the right time and place. He was aware of this and spoke of it. His luck was illustrated in his escape from the assassin's bullet, at McVicker's theatre, Chicago, April 23, 1879. He was acting Richard the Second, and had reached the soliloquy in the prison scene of the fifth act, when suddenly a man in the upper gallery fired at him twice, with a pistol.[1] The bullets barely missed their mark — but they missed. One of

[1] The subjoined account of that attempt at murder appeared in the *Dial*, June 16, 1893, from the pen of an eye-witness: —

"The last act was in progress, and the king was alone in the dungeon of Pomfret Castle. Seated, he was reciting the great soliloquy: —

> 'I have been studying how I may compare
> This prison where I live, unto the world;
> And, for because the world is populous,
> And here is not a creature but myself,
> I cannot do it: — yet I'll hammer it out.'

At this moment a pistol shot came from the right (looking from the stage) of the first balcony. I was seated near the front of the house, and looking around, saw a man leaning over the balcony railing, and raising his pistol for a second shot. The shot was fired, and then Mr. Booth slowly rose, stepped to the front of the stage and looked inquiringly towards the balcony. He saw the would-be assassin, saw the pistol raised for a third shot, turned around, and very deliberately walked back out of sight. In the meanwhile, his assailant was seized from behind, and was not permitted to pull the trigger for the third time. What particularly impressed me

and at Scarborough, which was crowded with fashionable visitors, the excitement aroused by his acting was great. On Sunday, September 17, Booth drove to Chatsworth, and visited the beautiful country-seat of the Duke of Devonshire, going also to the grave of Lord Frederick Cavendish, — murdered by Irish ruffians in Dublin, May 1882, — whose remains were laid in Edensor churchyard, in the park of Chatsworth. From Scarborough he went to Harrowgate and thence to Newcastle, where his first house was light, but on each succeeding evening the theatre was crowded. He then gave a week to Dundee and Aberdeen, at double prices, and in both those cities his success made a feast for the populace. The theatre was crowded each night; hundreds of persons had to be turned away; and when, on Sunday, October 8, he left Aberdeen, the railway station was crowded with spectators, who had come to give him a farewell greeting. The next city was Glasgow, where also Booth had a week of excellent business. Thence he went to Edinburgh; and there, as at Aberdeen and Dundee, the audience rose and cheered him at the end of his performances. For Scotland, indeed, the enthusiasm over Booth was extraordinary. An accident occurred to him at Dundee, where, in the combat scene in *Hamlet*, he was stabbed in the right arm by the sword of Laertes. The next night, acting in *The Fool's Revenge*, he still further injured his wounded arm, in his fall, so that for several nights he could not use it.

as hospitality, taste, and every appliance of culture and refinement could make it. He was eccentric and reticent, but he was deeply appreciative and full of sensibility and goodness; and as King Charles the Second said, of the poet Cowley, "he has not left a better man in England."

At Hull, on the last night of his appearance, more than a thousand persons paid for admission to the pit. In Leeds the tragedian had a good week, notwithstanding that he followed the exceedingly popular opera company of Carl Rosa, and that a heavy rain prevailed most of the time. Booth crossed, on Sunday, November 5, from Holyhead to Kingstown, having a distressingly rough voyage, and on November 6, appeared in Dublin, to a crowded house. In that capital the welcome accorded to him was enthusiastic. His Richelieu was greatly admired. His Hamlet was viewed with more critical eyes, and was lessened by comparison with the performances of Henry Irving and Barry Sullivan, long favourites in Dublin. His Bertuccio, however, was deemed magnificent. He acted with uncommon vigour, and wherever he appeared the local managers requested him to make a return visit.

Christmas, 1882, Booth passed at Morley's hotel, London, that cosy hermitage in the very centre of the world. He had seen Irving's production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, at the Lyceum, and of that he wrote to me, saying: "*Much Ado* is superbly 'staged' and finely acted. Irving's ideal and treatment of the hero are excellent, and Miss Ellen Terry's Beatrice is perfect — save for a little lack of power in the great scene with Benedick. The scenery and 'sets' are the finest I ever saw. . . ." Booth left London on December 27, and went directly to Berlin. His engagement there, at the Residenz theatre, began on January 11, 1883, and was renewed on January 23, for twelve additional performances. He appeared there as Hamlet, King Lear, and Iago. The death of Prince Charles, which put the

them Booth caused to be set in a gold cartridge, and he kept it as a memento. The wags of the press subsequently intimated that this deed was done in consequence of Booth's restoration to the stage of such a declamatory and oratorical person as Shakespeare's Richard the Second, whom they declared to be intolerable. The shots were fired by a stage-struck lunatic, named Mark Gray, who fancied that Booth was an obstacle in the way of his attainment of histrionic glory. He was promptly captured and confined. He said that he was a clerk, resident at St. Louis, twenty-three years old, had been for three years preparing to kill Booth, and was surprised at his failure, which he much regretted. This engaging person remained for some time in a lunatic asylum, at Elgin, Illinois, but ultimately was liberated, through the intercession of benevolent friends.[1]

Booth did not take a formal farewell of the theatre. His active professional career closed, as it had begun, by chance. The last appearance that he made as an actor occurred at the Academy of Music, Brooklyn, on

about the whole affair was the coolness displayed by Mr. Booth. He was playing the part of a king, and did not for a moment forsake the kingly impersonation. After a short time, Mr. Booth reappeared, begged the audience to excuse him for a few moments longer, while he should speak to his wife, finally came upon the stage again, and finished the act."

[1] Booth, who went to see his assailant, in prison, subsequently wrote as follows, to an attorney at Chicago: "I trust that our friend Gray may become gray indeed — yea, positively hoary-headed — in kind but careful confinement, or if earlier released, that his exit may be from this earthly stage of his dramatic exploits to that celestial scene where idiots cease from shooting and actors are at rest. If he be ever again at liberty my own life I shall not value worth a rush. But I hope the Elgin guardians will not be deceived by his seeming harmlessness."

April 4, 1891, in Hamlet, the character with which his temperament was most congenial, and with which, in the history of the stage, his name will be associated. His present biographer was in the audience, and wrote a record of that last appearance, in the *New York Tribune*, April 5, 1891, as follows: —

Edwin Booth ended his season yesterday afternoon at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, giving a performance of *Hamlet*, which was followed with deep interest and received with affectionate admiration by a multitude as numerous as could be crowded into that great theatre. Each scene was observed with a vigilance keener than that of critical taste — the vigilance of the heart. How much and how truly Booth is respected and loved might readily be seen in the faces of that eager throng.

Booth played Hamlet, in that mood of poetic exaltation, pensive melancholy, and exquisite refinement for which his acting of the part has long been distinguished, and in that tone of settled spiritual pain — that atmosphere of profound, inexorable grief — which is inseparable from a right embodiment of Shakespeare's conception. Poetry in the art of acting cannot be carried further than it is by Edwin Booth; and as he now passes into his chosen retirement, whether it be long or short, there will be a darkness upon the Shakespearian drama, until his gentle, gracious figure comes once more upon the scene, and his voice of eloquence and beauty speaks again.

After the last curtain the applause continued for a long time. The audience rose, and there was loud cheering, and Booth was recalled, again and again. In

and at Weimar. At Vienna he appeared in the Stadt theatre, March 30, and attracted and pleased great crowds of the inhabitants. The season ended on April 7, in that city.[1] Booth's tour was successful beyond precedent in Germany.[2] Wynn Miller, who conducted the business of the expedition, manifested judgment, taste, and energy. Booth had excellent health and was cheered by precisely the kind of recognition that he most valued, — so that, at the last, he was only slightly fatigued, notwithstanding the great and continuous efforts he had been obliged to make, and the heavy responsibility incident to his difficult and delicate venture, on a foreign stage and before an audience unacquainted with his language. There was no element of fashion, caprice, accident, or mountebank advertisement in the success of Booth. His natural endowments, simple individuality, steadfast endurance, patience, labour, and high purpose made him what he was. He stood at the head of his profession by virtue of genius,

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winning sweetness of manner, together with sincerity and simplicity of language, presented to them the title-deeds to their club-house, the building No. 16 Gramercy Park, which, with its unique furniture, works of art, and fine decorations, was his personal gift to the club. The applause that greeted him came from the hearts of all who heard his voice — for every heart felt the absolute earnestness of his words, and recognised the fine generosity of his conduct. No speech was ever in better taste, nor was there ever a good deed done with more grace, humility, and sweetness. Augustin Daly, Vice-President of the Players, responded to Booth's address, fitly remarking upon the opulence and significance of the gift, and accepting the club-house, not alone in the name of the Players now existent, but also in the name of generations of Players yet to come. Lawrence Barrett, who had a principal hand in helping Booth to accomplish the organisation of the club, followed Mr. Daly, and after a fervent expression of his sympathy with the purpose of the Players, read a touching letter from Booth's daughter, Mrs. Edwina Booth Grossman, presenting a wreath of laurel, to be placed on her father's head, and enclosing a poem commemorative of the occasion, by Thomas W. Parsons, the author of the noble ode on Dante. Barrett read the lines with cordial feeling. At one line, beginning, "Tragedian, take the crown," a deep-toned clock suddenly and solemnly boomed forth the midnight hour. To Booth, the letter and tribute from his beloved daughter and the poem from his old friend were unexpected, and those who stood near and saw his emotion, knew that his heart was deeply touched. Not often in

a lifetime occurs a moment so memorable and so fraught with feeling as that moment was when Lawrence Barrett extended to Booth the wreath of laurel sent from a daughter's love, and then and there consecrated with the blessing of a host of friends. Booth said a few faltering words in reply, and directed the lighting of the Yule-log, also his daughter's gift, and summoned and set in motion the loving-cup of the Players. On a paper attached to the wreath from his daughter was written the inscription, from Shakespeare, "Hamlet — King — Father." The loving-cup is one that was given to William Warren, October 28, 1882,[1] in honour of his fiftieth year upon the stage, by Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, Mary Anderson, Lawrence Barrett, and John McCullough — a massive, handsome vessel, inscribed with those names. Warren, who died on September 21, 1888, bequeathed it to Jefferson, and Jefferson gave it to the Players. When this had circulated, the formal services to dedicate the club came to an end, the supper-room was opened, and the Players, obeying the Shakespearian injunction to "apprehend nothing but jollity," devoted the rest of the night to the enjoyment of their festival.

[1] Booth was in Scotland at the time, but he remembered the occasion, and he wrote to Warren these words, from Aberdeen, October 6, 1882: "Your goodness, both as man and actor, mingles vividly with my earliest memories. I well remember my father's warm regard for you, and his admiration of your acting, and I fancy that I inherited an affection that many years have strengthened.

"That your anniversary will be the occasion of an outpour of tenderest emotions from all hearts in Boston you need not be assured. But there are many hearts elsewhere (and, you know, "there is a world elsewhere") that will beat in sympathy — many friends who regret, as I do, the inability to 'assist' at your fête — at your well-earned coronation. God bless you.

"EDWIN BOOTH."

In that way was ushered in a Happy New Year for the metropolitan stage. In Booth's design, to which he gave an expression so substantial and so practical, the establishment of the Players was to augment the social comfort and influence of actors, and thus to exert a beneficial power upon the stage. The club-house is one of rare beauty; but it is not upon opulent and lovely surroundings that the tragedian chiefly depended, in his enterprise of fraternal affection and professional honour. He sought to establish an institution in which influences of learning and taste should be brought to bear upon the members of the stage — a place where they might find books and pictures, precious relics of the great players of the past, intellectual communion with minds of their own order, and with men of education in other walks of life, refinement of thought and of manners, innocent pleasure, and sweet, gracious, ennobling associations. He wished the Players' Club to represent all that is best in the dramatic profession, to foster the dramatic art, and to exalt the standard of personal worth among the actors of America.

The Players' Club was incorporated on January 7, 1888 — the incorporators being Lawrence Barrett, William Bispham, Edwin Booth, Samuel Clemens, Augustin Daly, Joseph F. Daly, John Drew, Henry Edwards, Laurence Hutton, Joseph Jefferson, John A. Lane, James Lewis, Brander Matthews, Stephen H. Olin, A. M. Palmer, and Gen. William T. Sherman. The first board of officers was constituted as follows: President, Edwin Booth; vice-president, Augustin Daly; secretary, Laurence Hutton; treasurer, William Bispham. The officers are elected annually, by a Board of

Directors, which is permanent. The first Board of Directors included Edwin Booth, Augustin Daly, Lawrence Barrett, A. M. Palmer, Laurence Hutton, Joseph F. Daly, Henry Edwards, Joseph Jefferson, and William Bispham. The directors must be citizens of the United States, or persons long resident therein, and identified with American art, literature, or drama. At least five of the directors must be actors, managers, or dramatists. Any male person who is twenty-one years of age is eligible for membership, if in any way connected with artistic life — be it only as "a patron or connoisseur of the arts." The membership is limited to five hundred persons, half of them resident and half non-resident. An annual club-dinner is given, on each New-Year's Eve. It was Booth's desire that at least ten per cent of the members should be actors. The good results of such an organization proceed from its indirect influence — the existence of an opulent and flourishing social club, representative of actors, being at once a source of beneficial enjoyment to its dramatic members, and a token to the community of the solidity and worth of the dramatic profession.

In the Players Club, in rooms on the third floor, reserved for his private residence, Booth passed the last four years of his life, and there he died, June 8, 1893, in the sixtieth year of his age.

The illness that came upon Booth at Rochester, April 3, 1889, was a slight stroke of paralysis. He described the occurrence to me, a few days later, immediately after his return to New York. He was in a carriage, with Lawrence Barrett, driving to the theatre, when he first noticed that his articulation had become impeded.

PHOTO. BY SARONY. ARTOTYPE, E. BIERSTADT, N. Y.

EDWIN BOOTH.
1889.

He thought the difficulty would soon cease and he did not try to make it known. On entering the stage-door he was unable to respond to the greeting of the janitor, and, this being the first night of the engagement, he was mortified at being compelled to seem churlish toward a stranger. He repaired to his room and put on the dress of Othello, trusting and expecting that his speech would soon be restored. It was not till he had reached the stage and attempted to speak that he found himself incapable of clear utterance. The performance proceeded but a little way when he broke down altogether, and the curtain was dropped. Barrett, startled and overwhelmed, made a brief speech to the audience, saying that Booth was disabled and probably would never act again. He recovered, though, and in a short time resumed his tour; but he steadily declined, from that day.

A great element in Booth's character, however, was patience, and nothing in his life so became him as the beautiful spirit of resignation with which he accepted the inevitable transit into the sere and yellow, and the ever-increasing distress and misery of his last illness. It was my privilege often to be in his company. When he founded the Players Club he asked me to join it, and to be its Librarian, and he proposed that we should, together, in that club and with the aid of its library, compile and write a history of the theatre in America; and that design would have been accomplished, had it not presently been resolved by the directors that professional reviewers of the stage were not eligible for membership, and had I not found that, in order to remain in the club, I should have to sever my relations with the

Press. Our design miscarried — to his deep regret as well as mine; but this did not prevent our frequent meetings and his free talk upon every subject that interested his mind. One of those subjects was the mutation of public taste with respect to the stage. Booth was aware that the school of acting represented by him had, in a considerable degree, gone out of fashion, and he was thoroughly acquainted with the changes that have passed over the theatre in our time. He could remember the period before the "society lady" trooped upon the scene, before the whole community turned actor, and before the doctrine came up that the true art of acting consists in doing, upon the stage, exactly what people do in actual life. He did not adopt that foolish theory, and, as he looked around upon the actors and writers of the new age, he did not admire its results. He knew that art is romantic, and that the moment romance is sacrificed to reality acting becomes worse than useless and the stage is dead. He believed that there is a difference between the ideal and the actual; between poetry and prose; between the interesting and the commonplace. He thought that an actor can be natural without being literal, and he believed that the contemporary taste for what is called "nature" — but really is prosaic and spiritless photography — will run its course and expire, and that the community will revert to its old allegiance to romance and beauty. Those views I believe to be sound. The art of acting, — and this is true, also, of each of the other arts, — is controlled and fashioned by the popular caprice, only in the absence of great leaders of thought and feeling. When a Garrick, a Booth, or an Irving

arises, he leads the public and he moulds the stage; and this he does, not with the conscious purpose of pleasing the community, but with the spontaneous impulse to fulfil himself. It is the instinctive desire of personal expression, much more than a wish to please or benefit the public, and much more than a wish to interpret the dramatic conceptions of other minds, that drives an artistic temperament to the stage. The original, propulsive spring and power of acting is a rich, exuberant, vital dramatic personality, and that also is its essential need. Such a force does not take its law from its audience. As long as Booth retained his health and his spirits he had no need to consider the fancies of the public. He swayed those fancies and he satisfied them. The public mandate may control a jester; it cannot regulate a genius.

The facts of Booth's career and the achievements of his art show that his ambition was controlled and directed by moral integrity and by a spirit spontaneously chivalric in the conduct of life. He attained, in the esteem of his countrymen, to the high and honourable rank of the representative tragedian of the time. Success of that kind is not the result of accident. Favorable circumstances may have accelerated its attainment, but they never could have placed within the grasp of an unworthy man the gracious and pure reward of the sincere devotion of genuine ability to the service of a great art. That reward comes only to men of a high order of intellect, combined with indomitable energy, patience, and the innate consciousness of power which sustains the mind through trouble, toil, neglect, temporary failure, disappointment, dejection, bereavement, the per-

plexing annoyance of care, the acute knowledge of being misunderstood and misrepresented, the insolence of envy, and the antagonisms and slanders of sleepless malice. All those Edwin Booth had to encounter; and over them all — and in spite of hereditary attributes dangerous to symmetry of character and happiness of life — he rose into triumph; the triumph of upright, beneficent conduct and illustrious reputation. That result was due to the force of natural talents, high ambition, tireless endeavour, sincerity, moral worth, and, over all, the glamour of genius: —

> "The untaught strain
> That sheds beauty on the rose."

The sovereign element in Booth's nature was the profound and intense power, equally of emotion and of intellect, with which he interpreted humanity in the highest, most beautiful, and most difficult forms of art. His brain was firmly knitted; his feelings were concentrated; and his acting, therefore, was vitalised by a prodigious sincerity. He could not at all times summon the fire of inspiration: he was, on some occasions, frigid and formal: but when thoroughly aroused, — as in the arras scene of Hamlet, the anathema scene of Richelieu, the frantic threat scene of King Lear, the supplication scene of Bertuccio, the street scene of Shylock, the imprecation scene of Brutus, the tent scene of Richard, and the fight of Macbeth, — he rose to sublime passion, and he overwhelmed the auditor equally with the copious volume of his feeling and the splendour of his artistic utterance. In those moments the fire of his temperament seemed volcanic; and, looking back now to those revelations of his soul, it is not difficult to

understand the nervous disturbance and distress with which he was long oppressed, the moodiness and stern abstraction to which he was subject, the apathy into which he sometimes drifted, and the comparatively early extinction of his marvellous vitality.

In the presence of any professional achievement by Edwin Booth, the observer's mind was conscious of perfect adequacy and noble fulfilment. The embodiment, whatever might be the part, was genuine. It filled the eye. It awakened the heart. It inspired and satisfied the imagination. It was followed with keen interest and unfailing delight, and it was treasured with affectionate remembrance. The observer never felt, recalling Booth's performances, that while he had been looking at them he had been wasting time. Much of the material and many of the persons customarily shown upon the stage can neither be seen with pleasure nor remembered with patience. The acting of Booth, on the contrary, exemplified the substantial and permanent worth of dramatic art — its beauty, its nobility, its beneficence; and therein it displayed the reason why the stage should exist. If it were not for the coming of such an actor, now and then, to whom Nature has given a great soul, as well as suitable physical equipment and mimetic and interpretative faculty, the theatre would be a wilderness of trash, and perhaps the most tedious nuisance in the social world. In Booth's execution of his ideals there was apparent, in great and ever-growing fullness, the quality of living rather than acting. His figures were unconscious of an audience and of surroundings. They crossed the stage like embodied phantoms from a land of dreams. The curtain was

drawn aside and the gazer looked, through some vast casement or cathedral arch, into the luminous world of the past, beholding its actual denizens, living their actual lives. Booth's embodiments of Lucius Brutus and of Richelieu, for instance, revealed historical pictures, animated with the spirit of a great man, and as diffusive of spiritual experience as they were expressive of dramatic art. The sanctity of the affections, the grandeur of power when allied to goodness, the eternal youth of the human soul — those are the sum of good that was carried away in remembrance of his supreme achievements. Youth passes; hopes are withered; riches take wings; health declines; the shadows gather; the dark ocean whispers, and waits for all: but the true heart, the righteous mind, and the strong will are sufficient unto themselves, and predominant over chance and change, and will stand firm forever. Acting which is productive of that result accomplishes the utmost and the best that could be claimed for its province in human society.

In conversations with me, in the last years of his life, Booth spoke much of his father, of domestic and personal affairs, of religion and the spiritual life, and of many other subjects that occupied his thoughts. The habitual tone of his mind, during his last days, was exceedingly gentle. He would now and then evince, by a satirical word, some impatience of the self-seeking with which he was but too frequently importuned. More often he would become humorous, and when he spoke, as he frequently did, of his illness and of the countless curative measures that had been recommended to him, he was especially comic. With

respect to the use of medicine, he approved of the method of that esteemed actress, the late Mrs. Vincent, of the Boston Museum, who, whenever ill, always obtained whatever remedy was prescribed, placed it in a bureau, and left it there — declaring, next day, that she felt much better. He said that he had never cared much for acting, and latterly had not cared for it at all. "I don't care to read old plays, any more," he said, "but I like to read about the old dramatists. I cannot imagine what could have been the charm of Garrick's performance of Abel Drugger." He was reminiscent, in a very gentle strain, of Lawrence Barrett, and described their last performance, in *Richelieu*,[1] and the final parting, on the next day, Thursday, March 19, 1891 — Barrett, on his death-bed, yet brave, and hopeful of recovery, bidding him to stay away, lest he might himself get ill. He mentioned, in affectionate terms, several absent friends, — Aldrich, Furness, Hutton, Jefferson, and John S. Clarke. "I shall, probably, never act again," he said, "and I don't want to travel. I have been travelling all my life. What I want now

[1] Lawrence Barrett made his last appearance on the stage, on Wednesday evening, March 18, 1891, at the Broadway theatre, New York. The play was *Richelieu*. Booth acted the Cardinal; Barrett, De Mauprat. Booth was informed, early in the evening, that Barrett, who had arrived and repaired to his dressing-room, seemed to be very ill. "I immediately went to him," said Booth. "He was seated in a chair, against the wall, and had not yet taken off his hat or overcoat. The coat-collar was turned up, so as almost to hide his face, and he had been crying. He became calm at once. I urged him to go home, but he insisted on playing, and he managed to get as far as the end of the third act; but when he bent over me, after I was on the Cardinal's bed, he whispered, 'I cannot go on.'" Barrett died on March 20, and on March 24 he was buried, at Cohasset, Massachusetts, beside the sea.

is to stay in one place, with things that I like around me." He then recalled, with evident pleasure, his professional season with Irving, in London (1881). "I enjoyed every hour of it," he continued, "and so I did the season in Germany." He spoke of his first visit to Paris, made in 1860-61, under the Empire, in company with George H. Boughton, the artist, whom he cordially liked, and he declared that the city was then entirely delightful to him. "I was always of a boyish spirit," he said, "and if my physical health were good I should still be very boyish; but there was always an air of melancholy about me, that made me seem much more serious than I ever really was." In another conversation he mentioned having acted Captain Murphy Maguire, in *The Serious Family*, with Matilda Heron as the Widow Delmaine. That was in his California days. "Some of the German actors," he said, "when they play Shylock, make him speak with a Jewish accent, or in a sort of dialect. My father," he added, "used to play Shylock in that way." He mentioned J. B. Roberts, as Roderick Dhu. Many profile paste-board images had been made, to represent Roderick's men, who were to start up, in the bracken, at their chieftain's call; but the machinery employed to raise them proved defective, and at Roderick's whistle his paper warriors arose, wrong side outward, in every conceivable posture, but mostly in a state of forward oscillation. "The effect," said Booth, "was extremely ludicrous." We were speaking of the memoirs that are written by actors. "With few exceptions," he said, "they are all alike. The same comic mishaps occur to everybody on the stage. I could fill pages with stories of that kind."

The humorous side of Booth's nature was delightful. It appeared in his familiar talk, in his reminiscences and anecdotes, and sometimes in his letters. The attitude that he maintained toward the world, was, publicly, that of brilliant achievement; privately, that of reserve and silence. In the presence of strangers, in the ordinary intercourse of social life, he was cold and formal; but in the company of intimate friends his shy and frigid manner vanished, and he became genial and playful. He was uncommonly apt in telling comic stories, — his fine dark eyes, mobile features, and expressive voice giving effect to every word; but he talked freely only when in the society of those whom he knew well and with whom he felt at ease. Speaking of that peculiarity,[1] he once mentioned to me an amusing incident of his experience at a dinner party at the Boston house of Oliver Wendell Holmes. The company, he said, was large, and the conversation animated. He had taken no part in it, except that of a listener. Something presently suggested an anecdote to him, and he began to speak to his nearest neighbour. Instantly there was attentive silence all round the table. "I never got beyond the first sentence," Booth added, "for the sudden stillness and the general attention so startled me that I completely forgot what I had intended to say,

[1] A comment made by Booth, when referring to his Winter Garden days, denotes his temperament and also his sense of the impression that it sometimes made upon the minds of others: —

"The labour I underwent at that time, with domestic afflictions weighing heavily upon me, made me very unfit for social enjoyment of any kind, and I was forced to shut myself up a great deal. This, of course, made people think me haughty, self-conceited, and 'Hamlet-y' all the time; whereas I was very weary and unhappy." — MS. NOTE BY E. B., 1874.

and so stuck fast and said nothing." People often thought him distant and haughty, when he was only constrained by excess of modesty. Beneath his reserve there was, in fact, abundance of kindness, and, in spite of many troubles, and latterly of radical ill-health, he kept, to the last, the sportive disposition of a boy. "I don't enjoy going to funerals," he said, when asked to be one of the pall-bearers at the funeral of John Brougham.[1] At the instance of Lawrence Barrett he attended the funeral of E. P. Whipple, in Boston; but the queer facial contortions of the officiating clergyman quite overcame his gravity and his patience. "I knew Mr. Whipple slightly," he remarked to Barrett, as they left the church; "but I never thought I should be so sorry for his death."

Booth, in his private life, was controlled by a keen sense of duty and by strong affections. As a son he was tenderly devoted, thoughtful of everything that could solace and soothe the declining years of an aged mother, provident of blessings, and tireless in deeds of gentle kindness and love. His reverence for the memory of his father always remained a passionate emotion. Portraits of his father and mother were hung in his bed-room, and there also he kept the portrait of his Mary

[1] The funeral of John Brougham occurred at the Church of the Transfiguration, in Twenty-ninth street, New York, on June 9, 1880. The pall-bearers were John R. Brady, S. L. M. Barlow, Edwin Booth, William Winter, F. C. Bangs, Charles Phelps, Noah Brooks, and John W. Carroll. . . . The funeral of W. J. Florence, in which also Booth participated, occurred at the cathedral in Twenty-ninth street, New York, November 23, 1891. The pall-bearers were A. M. Palmer, Clayton McMichael, Edwin Booth, William Winter, John Russell Young, C. Vilas, Col. Fearing, and D. Hecksher.

and that of his ill-fated brother, John Wilkes, whose terrible act and miserable catastrophe he never ceased to deplore. He was not a demonstrative friend; but in affliction and trouble he was constant, tender, and true.[1] He never forgot a kindness. Those who were good to him in his early life, when he was poor and often severely tried, were remembered by him in the days of his prosperity, and he was never so happy as when he could do them service. The first engagements that he made for Booth's theatre were those of D. C. Anderson and D. W. Waller, old California friends, and to the widow of Anderson he bequeathed a legacy, in his last will. An early engagement for that theatre, also, was that of the aged "Polly" Drummond, who had long outlived his usefulness, and was in penury. Drummond was the first husband of the actress known to our theatre, from 1825 to 1853, as the beautiful Mrs. Barrett. He appeared on Booth's stage in the character of An Old Man, Cousin to Capulet, who prattles at the masque in *Romeo and Juliet;* as the Priest, in *Hamlet;* and as the Physician, in *Macbeth.* Booth employed him from sheer kindness. He was always doing good deeds. An inadvertent heedlessness of the right thing at the right time was, indeed, constitutional with him, and he was not a philanthropist; but whenever he heard of suffering he was wishful to relieve it, and his career was not only brilliant with achievement for art but beautiful with service for humanity. At all times confiding, and

[1] One instance of his thoughtful affection and gentle goodness was his gift of many volumes to the Arthur Winter Memorial Library, in the Staten Island Academy, in several of which he wrote: "With affectionate remembrance of Artie, from his father's friend, EDWIN BOOTH."

therefore easily amenable to influence, he was not at all times sagacious as to his associates. In early life he sometimes pinned his faith to engaging but unworthy persons, and he suffered for that error. It is not an unusual experience, with broad, kindly, trustful natures, who have not yet learned by experience the pettiness, selfishness, treachery, and malice that are in the world, and what comfort many persons find in the utterance of detraction and spite. In mature years, however, Booth's friendship was not rashly bestowed. Among the men whom he especially loved and trusted were William Bispham, John Henry Magonigle, E. C. Benedict, T. B. Aldrich, Charles E. Carryl,[1] Eastman Johnson, Lorrimer Graham, and Laurence Hutton. He had but few intimates. The friends who cherished gentle thoughts of him, however, were legion. No man was ever more deeply honoured or more dearly loved.

One of Booth's thoughtful and gentle deeds was the restoration of the monument that marks the grave of George Frederick Cooke, in the old burying ground of St. Paul's chapel, in New York. Cooke, a stranger, far from home, died in New York in 1812, and his remains were laid in the strangers' vault in that chapel, where they rested nine years. In 1821 Edmund Kean, who was acting at the Park, caused the body of his famous exemplar and predecessor in the tragic art to be disinterred, and laid in a grave in the churchyard, over which he erected the tomb — a plain rectangular pillar

[1] Booth was fond of children, and very kind to them. One of his pets was Constance, the little daughter of Charles E. Carryl, and he kept her portrait in sight, on his mantel-shelf, at the Players. During one of his later seasons on the New York stage, remembering the child's birthday, he sent

surmounted with an urn — that still marks the spot. At that time Kean obtained the bone of Cooke's forefinger of the right hand, which had been so conspicuous and effective in his acting, and Dr. Francis took possession of his skull. Those acts of reverential desecration are recorded by Dr. Francis, in his book on *Old New York*. In 1846 the tomb of Cooke had fallen into decay, and Charles Kean, who had come to New York to act, repaired the structure that his father had erected. Time dealt with it severely, however, and in 1873 it

to her a box at the Broadway theatre, for *The Fool's Revenge*. On her arrival, with a party of friends, an usher presented to her a bunch of white roses, and the following lines : —

BERTUCCIO'S WISHES FOR MANIE HAPPIE RETURNS OF THE DAYE.

To Ye
Ladye Constance on her Twelfth Birthday.

Fair ladye bright,
Thy knobby knight —
Bertuccio hight —
Poor twisted wight!
On crooked knees
Presenteth these —
True emblems, sure,
Of thy sweet self —
Twelve rose-buds pure,
No more, no fewer,
To number your
Birthday — ye twelfth.
May many years
Of joyful days
Be thine, sweet maid,
And all thy tears
With smiles be shed!
Rest thou in peace,
For now I'll cease ;
My say is said.

The child was deeply impressed by this, and when Booth, on a call before the curtain, chanced to bow towards the box, she quite upset his gravity by rising and making him a curtsey in return.

was seen to be again dilapidated. Edward A. Sothern observed this, and by his direction, and under the supervision of Thomas E. Mills, of Wallack's theatre, the tomb was renovated, in 1874, the stones composing it being bound together with iron anchors and cement. The monument seemed then likely long to resist decay and tempest. Yet sixteen years later it was found to be crumbling, and, in 1890, it was thoroughly repaired by Edwin Booth. I went with him one summer afternoon (May 31, 1890) to that churchyard, after the work of restoration had been completed, and we stood together a long time, in silence, at the sepulchre of the great actor. It was near sunset, and birds were circling about the church spire, and the grass was stirring in the gentle evening wind. No word was spoken. Booth's thoughts, I well knew, were busy with the solemn meaning of the scene — its lonely aspect of inevitable and inscrutable finality, its pathos, its monition: —

"The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

The inscriptions on Cooke's tomb are as follows: —

South side:

ERECTED TO THE MEMORY
OF
GEO. FREDK. COOKE.
BY
EDMUND KEAN
OF THE
Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,
1821.

Three kingdoms claim his birth,
Both hemispheres pronounce his worth.

North side:

REPAIRED BY CHARLES KEAN,
1846.

East side:

REPAIRED BY E. A. SOTHERN,
Theatre Royal, Haymarket,
1874.

West side:

REPAIRED BY EDWIN BOOTH,
1890.

Booth seldom participated in public proceedings of any kind, apart from those of the theatre. He was averse to speech-making, and he possessed no conspicuous talent for that art. Yet there were occasions when he was induced to speak in public, and he spoke well. His delivery of a portion of Stoddard's fine poem on Shakespeare, at the dedication of the Shakespeare monument in Central Park, May 23, 1872, was spirited and brilliant. He was much agitated, on that occasion, yet he bore himself with composure, and, although speaking in the open air, he made every word effective, and he much enhanced the beauty of an imposing ceremony. His present biographer enjoyed that effort, upon a "coign of vantage" in the top of a neighbouring tree. Booth did not like to give readings or recitals, but whenever he did give them he produced a fine effect. His delivery of *Manfred*, and of Collins's ode on *The Passions*, was copious, various, and splendid. The former he read at the Academy of Music, New York, before the Phil-

harmonic Society, May 7, 1869; the latter, at Steinway Hall, New York, February 12, 1870.[1] The address that he delivered on the opening night of Booth's theatre was written, and he carried the manuscript during the delivery of it. At the dedication of the Poe monument, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, May 4, 1885, he delivered an address that was deemed judicious and appropriate, and it was spoken in an impressive manner. He made a felicitous speech, also, at the dedication of the Actors' monument, in Evergreens Cemetery, Long Island, New York, June 6, 1887.

Upon the soul and scope of Booth's dramatic genius comment cannot take the form of absolute precision. The subtle odour of the jasmine is not more illusive than the secret of the charm which at once kindles and hallows the intellect, making it potent to beguile mankind of equal admiration and love. Spiritual personality eludes definition. In the endless study of acting, moreover, the conclusions of analysis are never universally accepted. To comprehend an actor's ideal of an author's conception and to compare it with your own, assenting if the two agree and dissenting if they differ, is the usual method. It seldom leads a student to unqualified admiration of all the ideals of an actor, and it often leaves judges, of liberal culture and discrimination, in the attitude of controversy. It is defec-

[1] A symphony, by Edward Mollenhauer, on Collins's ode on *The Passions*, was performed at Steinway Hall, Saturday evening, February 12, 1870. Booth's elocution, in the delivery of the poem, was delightfully graceful and effective, although, as the ode had to be read in detached parts, with intervals of music, the effect of transition from one passion to another was, necessarily, sacrificed. Mollenhauer's music evinced not only poetic sensibility but poetic faculty.

tive, furthermore, in its insistence upon design rather than execution. Acting is not literature; neither is it theory.

The province of the actor is kindred with that of the poet — who is a commentator upon human life, in the realm of the ideal as well as in the realm of fact. If the actor possess genius, he will become the interpreter of humanity, and its helper and guide; and that, no doubt, is why a great actor is so much honoured in life, and so much deplored in death. Edwin Booth was a benefactor to thousands, revealing to them, in forms and colours of beauty, and in startling shapes of power and terror, the complex mechanism of human nature and the wonderful possibilities of spiritual destiny. To be is more than to do, and the personality of Booth was greater than his achievement. By birth and heredity he possessed faculties and qualities that most actors pass laborious lives in the fruitless effort to emulate — the faculties and qualities, namely, of genius and personal charm, that constitute distinction and lead directly to conquest. His face, his voice, his person, his demeanour, and his brilliant, indomitable spirit — those were his authentic preordination to empire and renown. As a young man his beauty was extraordinary. His dark eyes flashed with superb fire, not alone of physical vitality, but of imagination, emotion, and exaltation of the soul. In mature years the same nobility of presence continued to subsist, but it was softened and hallowed by experience and grief. Alike in youth and age, in bloom and in decline, he was exceptional and rare, a striking product of nature, and as such a puissant and predominant force. He needed not to seek after novelties;

he was himself a novelty. The old plays were adequate for his purpose, because, in his inspired expression of their thought and feeling, character and action, he made them ever new. His success was that of a great personality, — specially shown in the equilibrium of his intellectual life and its freedom from fret and fume. All his mistakes and most of his troubles resulted from the amiable weakness with which he sometimes permitted himself to become entangled with paltry, scheming, unworthy people. By himself, — isolated, introspective, strange, wayward, variable, moody, yet noble, gentle, affectionate, generous, — he was incarnate victory.

The salient attributes of Booth's art were imagination, insight, grace, intense emotion, and melancholy refinement. In Hamlet, Richelieu, Othello, Iago, King Lear, Bertuccio, and Lucius Brutus they were conspicuously manifest. But the controlling attribute, — that which imparted individual character, colour, and fascination to his acting, — was the thoughtful, introspective habit of a stately mind, abstracted from passion and suffused with mournful dreaminess of temperament. The moment that charm began to work, his victory was complete. It was that which made him the true image of Shakespeare's thought, in the glittering halls of Elsinore, on its midnight battlements, and in its lonely, wind-beaten place of graves.

Under the discipline of sorrow, and through "years that bring the philosophic mind," Booth drifted further and further away from things dark and terrible, whether in the possibilities of human life or in the world of imagination. That is the direction of true growth. In

all characters that evoked his essential spirit — in characters which rest on spiritualised intellect, or on sensibility to fragile loveliness, the joy that is unattainable, the glory that fades, and the beauty that perishes — he was peerless. Hamlet, Richelieu, Faust, Manfred, Jacques, Esmond, Sydney Carton, and Sir Edward Mortimer are all, in different ways, suggestive of the personality that Booth was fitted to illustrate. It is the loftiest type that human nature affords, because it is the embodied supremacy of the soul, and because therein it denotes the only possible escape from the cares and vanities of a transitory world.

The last two or three years of Booth's life were years of difficult endeavour and patient endurance for him, and of anxious solicitude for his friends. He passed most of the time, after April, 1891, at the Players' Club; but he made occasional excursions to Newport and Narragansett Pier, he visited Jefferson, at Buzzard's Bay, he spent a few days in Boston, and he lived for a while at Lakewood, New Jersey. His health failed gradually, but with an obvious and dreadful certainty. He was aware of his condition. He knew that the end of his earthly life was near; but he did not brood over it, and he did not fear it. He had often said, with Hamlet, "the readiness is all," and he was prepared to answer the summons whenever it might come. There were moments when, in his human weakness, he grew helpless and forlorn. One such moment I well remember, — a sorrowful evening, — when, looking with sad, wistful eyes, he said, "I don't know what is to become of me. My strength is going. I grow weaker, all the time; and if I cannot play the parts well, I must quit

acting. I don't know what to do." It was hard to counsel him to quit acting, but that counsel was given. He loved to talk of Shakespeare and the Shakespeare country, and to plan little walking-tours in lovely Warwickshire. "People would not let me ramble about there as I liked," he said. "There were entertainments, and I was made a lion. It was done in kindness, but I wish I could have gone about without being known and without attracting attention." Upon any topic associated with the name of Shakespeare he dwelt with keen interest. The crazy notion that Shakespeare's plays were written by Bacon amused him, and he expressed a mild wonder at the possibility of even a passing credence for such egregious folly. In reading, in meditation, in the society of his beloved daughter and her children, in talk with his friends, and in observance of the orders of his physician, he passed through the wearisome ordeal of those months of decline. At most times he was composed and firm; at all times he was patient; and he died, as he had lived, in the poise and serenity of a steadfast character, and in calm reliance on his unclouded conviction of a life beyond the grave.

It was my fortune to be far away from him — at Mentone, in Southern California — in his last days, and when he died; but I was frequently and fully advised of his state. A stroke of paralysis came upon him on the night of April 19, 1893. From that hour he lingered, — sometimes in a semi-conscious condition, more often in stupor or delirium, — till the night of June 7, when he sank rapidly, and so expired. His death occurred at 1.17 o'clock on Wednesday morning,

June 8.[1] A moment before he drew his last breath, all the electric lights in the Players' Club and in the neighbourhood by chance grew dim, and were extinguished; but the current was re-established the instant before he passed away. At his bedside, during his last hours, were his daughter and her husband; his affectionate and devoted friends, Magonigle, William Bispham, and Charles E. Carryl; his faithful physician, Dr. St. Clair Smith; and two nurses. His funeral occurred on June 9, at the Church of the Transfiguration, in 29th street, New York. Bishop Henry C. Potter, Rev. Dr. George H. Houghton, and Rev. C. W. Bispham, of Washington, conducted the service. More than three thousand persons attended those obsequies. The remains were conveyed to Boston, the same day, and were laid in the grave, at beautiful Mount Auburn, in the neighbourhood of that city, in presence of a great company of mourners. The funeral train reached the cemetery at sunset. The day had been overcast and drear; but after the procession had halted, and just as the clergyman, Rev. Dr. Frisby, of Boston, began to read the committal service for the dead, the clouds parted, and the purple glory of the sinking sun poured upon the coffin in a sudden flood of light, and illumined

[1] The death of Booth elicited expressions of sorrow from the Press of all nations, and from many societies and individuals of distinction and importance. The following cable dispatch was received from the leader of the English stage: —

LONDON, June 8, 1893.

MY DEAR WINTER: I am grieved beyond measure at the sad news of poor dear Booth's death. The world is poorer to-day by a great and true man. All love.

HENRY IRVING.

the whole solemn scene as with the splendour of heaven.[1] Long after the burial ceremonies were completed, and the grave had been filled, the people lingered at the spot, and at length, forming themselves into a procession, they passed around it, and loving hands cast flowers upon it, until a heap of roses was all that could be seen.

Booth was almost the last of the actors who are interesting. He was unique. He stood apart. He pursued his natural course, without solicitude as to

[1] Booth's pall was borne by Charles P. Daly, Horace Howard Furness, Joseph Jefferson, A. M. Palmer, William Bispham, T. B. Aldrich, and Eastman Johnson.

Aldrich followed the remains to Boston, and was present at the burial, and he sent the scene to me, in these tender and lovely words: —

PONKAPOG, MASS., June 12, 1893.

DEAR WILL: We reached Mount Auburn a few minutes before sunset. Just as Edwin was laid in the grave, among the fragrant pine-boughs which lined it, and softened its cruelty, the sun went down. I never saw anything of such heart-breaking loveliness as this scene. There in the tender afterglow two or three hundred men and women stood silent, with bowed heads. A single bird, in a nest hidden somewhere near by, twittered from time to time. The soft June air, blowing across the upland, brought with it the scent of syringa blossoms from the slope below. Overhead and among the trees the twilight was gathering. "Good night, sweet Prince!" I said, under my breath, remembering your quotation. Then I thought of the years and years that had been made rich with his presence, and of the years that were to come, — for us not many, surely, — and if there had not been a crowd of people, I would have buried my face in the greensward and wept, as men may not do, and women may. And thus we left him.

Some day, when I come to New York, we must get together in a corner at the Players, and talk about him, — his sorrows and his genius, and his gentle soul.

Ever affectionately,

TOM.

public opinion or private censure. He had no vanity, no envy, no pettiness. He cared much more to deserve approbation than to possess it. He held his rank by merit, and he never wished to hold it by any other means. He was never a manipulator of newspapers, nor a seeker after notoriety. He was himself — original, genuine, simple, sincere. He respected the conventions of others, but he was not conventional. He was considerate of those around him, and appreciative of their sympathy, and wishful for their welfare; but he was not dependent on them; he was sufficient unto himself. His resources were within his mind. He liked solitude, and he lived much alone — reading, musing, pondering upon his art, and, especially, thinking of that one other subject which interested him, religion. The charm of his nature was blended composure, gentleness, and distinction. He had the constant spirit of a believer, the grave impartiality of a philosopher, and the pensive, dream-like temperament of a poet. He thus diffused an influence of strength, grace, and peace. His mood, at times, became listless and apathetic, and he allowed everything to drift; but his conduct of life was neither feverish nor flurried. At all times he reacted upon his circumstances and his associates, as an influence that composes and exalts. The vitalising element of his art was the romantic, imaginative, spiritual element. With the paganism of this age, — its materialistic tendency, its keen, hard, voluptuous desire and purpose to get everything out of animal existence that sensuality can yield, — he had no fellowship. His earthly life constantly anticipated a heavenly life to come; and, therefore, alike in his personal conduct and his public

embodiments, there was an ever-present and cogent attribute of noble and ennobling exaltation. Upon the marge of that illimitable ocean of mystery which encircles this world he stood, in awe and wonder, reverently gazing on its depths. Into that great sea he has vanished. Out across those sombre waters he has gone his lonely way. Farewell! A long farewell! No soul ever endured more sweetly the burden of mortal trials, or made more bravely that dark voyage into the great unknown.

On one of those sad days, after Booth was stricken, and when he was waiting for death, I wrote these words, thinking of him, three thousand miles away, and knowing that we were never to meet again, this side the grave: —

Be patient and be wise! The eyes of Death
Look on us with a smile: her soft caress,
That stills the anguish and that stops the breath,
Is Nature's ordination, meant to bless
Our mortal woes with peaceful nothingness.
Be not afraid! The Power that made the light
In your kind eyes, and set the stars on high,
And gave us love, meant not that all should die —
Like a brief day-beam quenched in sudden night.
Think that to die is but to fall asleep
And wake refreshed where the new morning breaks,
And golden day her rosy vigour takes
From winds that fan eternity's far height,
And the white crests of God's perpetual deep.

NOTE. — The reader of this memoir is advised to read also for additional facts and thoughts bearing upon this subject, essays written by me, on JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH and EDWIN BOOTH, in my *Shadows of the Stage*, first and second series.

CRAYON BY W. W SCOTT. ARTOTYPE, E. BIERSTADT, N. Y.

BOOTH AS HAMLET.

II.

THE ART OF EDWIN BOOTH.

"In the first seat, in robe of various dyes,
A noble wildness flashing from his eyes,
Sat SHAKESPEARE. — In one hand a wand he bore,
For mighty wonders fam'd in days of yore;
The other held a globe, which to his will
Obedient turn'd, and own'd the master's skill:
Things of the noblest kind his genius drew,
And look'd thro' Nature at a single view:
A loose he gave to his unbounded soul,
And taught new lands to rise, new seas to roll;
Call'd into being scenes unknown before,
And, passing Nature's bounds, was something more."

CHURCHILL.

II.

THE ART OF EDWIN BOOTH.

HAMLET.

OOTH'S impersonation of Hamlet was one of the best known works of the dramatic age. In many minds the actor and the character had become identical, and it is not to be doubted that Booth's performance of Hamlet will live, in commemorative dramatic history, with great representative embodiments of the stage — with Garrick's Lear, Kemble's Coriolanus, Edmund Kean's Richard, Macready's Macbeth, Forrest's Othello, and Irving's Mathias, and Becket. That it deserved historic permanence is the conviction of a great body of thoughtful students of Shakespeare and of the art of acting, in Great Britain and Germany as well as in America. In the elements of intellect, imagination, sublimity, mystery, tenderness, incipient delirium, and morbid passion, it was exactly consonant with what the best analysis has determined as to the conception of Shakespeare; while in sustained vigour, picturesque variety, and beautiful grace of execution, it was a model of executive art, — of demeanour, as the atmosphere of the soul, — facial play, gesticulation, and fluent and spontaneous delivery of the text; a delivery that made the blank verse as natural in its effect as

blank verse ought to be, or can be, without ever dropping it to the level of colloquialism and commonplace.

In each of Booth's performances a distinguishing attribute was simplicity of treatment, and that was significantly prominent in his portrayal of Hamlet. The rejection of all singularity and the avoidance of all meretricious ornament resulted in a sturdy artistic honesty, which could not be too much admired. The figure stood forth, distinct and stately, in a clear light. The attitudes, movements, gestures, and facial play combined in a fabric of symmetry and of always adequate expression. The text was spoken with ample vocal power and fine flexibility. The illustrative "business" was strictly accordant with the wonderful dignity and high intellectual worth of Shakespeare's creation. The illusion of the part was created with an almost magical sincerity, and was perfectly preserved. Booth's Hamlet was — as Hamlet on the stage should always be — an imaginative and poetic figure; and yet it was natural. To walk upon the stage with the blank verse stored in memory, with every particle of the business prearranged, with every emotion aroused yet controlled, and every effect considered, known, and pre-ordained, and yet to make the execution of a design seem involuntary and spontaneous, — that is the task set for the actor, and that task was accomplished by Booth.

Much is heard about "nature" in acting, and about the necessity of "feeling," on the part of an actor. The point has been too often obscured by ignorant or careless reasoning. An actor who abdicates intellectual supremacy ceases to be an actor, for he never can present a consistent and harmonious work. To yield to

unchecked feeling is to go to pieces. The actor who makes his audience weep is not he who himself weeps, but he who seems to weep. He will have the feeling, but he will control it and use it, and he will not show it in the manner of actual life. Mrs. Siddons said of herself that she had got credit for the truth and feeling of her acting, when she was only relieving her own heart of its grief; but Mrs. Siddons knew how to act, whatever were her personal emotions, — for it was she who admonished a young actor, saying, "You feel too much." Besides, every artist has a characteristic, individual way. If the representative of Hamlet will express the feelings of Hamlet, will convey them to his audience, and will make the poetic ideal an actual person, it makes no difference whether he is excited or quiescent. Feeling did not usually run away with Dion Boucicault: yet he could act Daddy O'Dowd so as to convulse an audience with sympathy and grief. Jefferson, the quintessence of tenderness, has often accomplished the same result with Rip Van Winkle. In one case the feeling was assumed and controlled; in the other, it is experienced and controlled. Acting is an art, and not a spasm; and when you saw Booth as Hamlet you saw a noble exemplification of that art, — the ideal of a poet, supplied with a physical investiture and made actual and natural, yet not lowered to the level of common life.

The tenderness of Hamlet toward Ophelia — or, rather, toward his ideal of Ophelia — was always set in a strong light, in Booth's acting of the part. He likewise gave felicitous expression to a deeper view of that subject — to Hamlet's pathetic realisation that

Ophelia is but a fragile nature, upon which his love has been wasted, and that, in such a world as this, love can find no anchor and no security. The forlorn desolation of the prince was thus made emphatic. One of the saddest things in Hamlet's experience is his baffled impulse to find rest in love — the crushing lesson, not only that Ophelia is incompetent to understand him, but that the stronger and finer a nature is, whether man or woman, the more inevitably it must stand alone. That hope by which so many fine spirits have been lured and baffled, of finding another heart upon which to repose when the burden of life becomes too heavy to be borne alone, is, of all hopes, the most delusive. Loneliness is the penalty of greatness. Booth was definite, also, as to the "madness" of Hamlet.[1] He was not absolutely mad, but substantially sane, — guarding himself, his secrets, and his purposes by assumed wildness; yet the awful loneliness of existence to which Hamlet has been se-

[1] In reply to a question on this subject, Booth wrote the following letter, which was printed by its recipient, in the *Nashville* (Tenn.) *Banner*: —

DEAR SIR: The subject to which you refer is, as you well know, one of endless controversy among the learned heads, and I dare say they will "war" over it "till time fades into eternity." I think I am asked the same question nearly three hundred and sixty-five times a year, and I usually find it safest to side with both parties in dispute, being one of those, perhaps, referred to in the last line of the following verse: —

"Genius, the Pythian of the beautiful,
Leaves her large truths a riddle to the dull;
From eyes profane a veil the Isis screens,
And fools on fools still ask what Hamlet means."

Yet, I will confess that I do not consider Hamlet mad, — except in "craft." My opinion may be of little value, but 'tis the result of many weary walks with him, "for hours together, here in the lobby."

Truly yours,

EDWIN BOOTH.

questered by his vast, profound, all-embracing, contemplative intellect, and by the mental shock and wrench that he has sustained, was allowed to colour his temperament. That idea might, in its practical application, be advantageously carried much further than it ever was by any actor; for, after the ghost-scene, the spiritual disease of the Dane would augment its ravages, and his figure should then appear in blight, disorder, dishevelment, and hopeless misery. Poetic gain, however, may sometimes be dramatic loss. To Hamlet the dreamer, Booth usually gave more emphasis than to Hamlet the sufferer — wisely remembering therein the value of stage effect for an audience. His Hamlet was a man to whom thoughts are things and actions are shadows, and who is defeated and overwhelmed by spiritual perceptions too vast for his haunted spirit, by griefs and shocks too great for his endurance, by wicked and compelling environments too strong for his nerveless opposition, and by duties too practical and onerous for his diseased and irresolute will. That was as near to the truth of Shakespeare as acting can reach, and it made Hamlet as intelligible as Hamlet can ever be.

To a man possessing the great intellect and the infinitely tender sensibility of Hamlet, grief does not come in the form of dejection, but in the form of a restless, turbulent, incessant agonising fever of vital agitation. He is never at rest. The grip that misery has fastened upon his soul is inexorable. Contemplation of the action and reaction of his spirit and his anguish is, to a thoughtful observer, kindred with observance of the hopeless suffering of a noble and beloved friend who is striving in vain against the slow, insidious,

fatal advance of wasting disease, which intends death, and which will certainly accomplish what it intends. The spirit of Hamlet is indomitable. It may be quenched, but it cannot be conquered. The freedom into which it has entered is the awful freedom that misery alone can give. Beautiful, desolate, harrowed with pain, but ever tremulous with the life of perception and feeling, it moves among phantom shapes and ghastly and hideous images, through wrecks of happiness and the glimmering waste of desolation. It is a distracted and irresolute spirit, made so by innate gloom and by the grandeur of its own vast perceptions. But it is never supine.

That pathetic condition of agonised unrest, that vitality of exquisite torture in the nature and experience of Hamlet, was indicated by Booth. He moved with grace; he spoke the text with ease, polish, spontaneous fluency, and rich and strong significance. The noble ideal and the clear-cut execution were obvious. But he crowned all by denoting, with incisive distinctness and with woful beauty, the pathetic vitality of the Hamlet experience. His impersonation had wealth of emotion, exalted poetry of treatment, and a dream-like quality that could not fail to fascinate; but, above all, when at its best, it had the terrible reality of suffering. There was no "realism" in it, no fantastic stage business, no laboured strangeness of new readings: it was a presentment of the spiritual state of a gifted man, whom nature and circumstance have made so clear-sighted and yet so wretchedly dubious that his surroundings overwhelm him, and life becomes to him a burden and a curse. Hamlet is a mystery. But, seeing that personation, the thinker saw what Shakespeare meant. Many a human soul has

had, or is now enduring, this experience, confronted with the duty of fulfilling a rational life, yet heart-broken with personal affliction, and bewildered with a sense of the awful mysteries of spiritual destiny and the supernal world. This is the great subject that Booth's performance of Hamlet presented — and presented in an entirely great manner. His scenes with the Ghost had a startling weirdness. His parting from Ophelia had the desolate and afflicting and therefore right effect of a parting from love, no less than from its object. His sudden delirium, in the killing of the concealed spy upon Hamlet's interview with the Queen, was wonderfully fine, and it always evoked a prodigious enthusiasm.

Booth's Hamlet did not love Ophelia. He had left behind not only that special love, but love itself — which was something that he remembered but could no longer feel. His Hamlet retained, under all the shocks of spiritual affliction, and through all the blight of physical suffering, a potent intellectual concentration and a princely investiture of decorous elegance: it was not a Hamlet of collapse and ruin: it was neither "fat" nor "scant of breath" — neither lethargic with the languor of misery, nor heavy with the fleshly grossness of supine sloth and abject prostration. The heart was corroded with sorrow, but the brain stood firm. Yet there were moments when the sanity of Booth's Hamlet lapsed into transient frenzy. A pathetic, involuntary tenderness played through his manner toward Ophelia, whom once he has loved and trusted, but whom he now knows to be a frail nature, however lovely and sweet. The pervasive tone of the

II.

THE ART OF EDWIN BOOTH.

embodiment was that of a sad isolation from humanity, a dream-like vagueness of condition, — as of one who wanders upon the dusky confines of another world, — and a drifting incertitude, very eloquent of the ravages of a terrible spiritual experience. The latter attribute was the poetic charm of Booth's Hamlet, and the poetic charm, the fine intellectuality, and the graceful execution of the work gave it at once extraordinary beauty and remarkable influence.

Acting, at its best, is the union of perfect expression with a true ideal. Booth's ideal of Hamlet satisfied the imagination more especially in this respect, that it left Hamlet substantially undefined. The character, or rather the temperament, was deeply felt, was imparted with flashes of great energy, and at moments was made exceedingly brilliant; but, for the most part, it was lived out in a dream, and was left to make its own way. There was no insistence on special views or on being specifically understood. And this mood mellowed the execution and gave it flexibility and warmth. Booth was an actor of uncertain impulses and conditions, and he was rightly understood only by those who saw him often, in any specified character. Like all persons of acute sensibility, he had his good moments and his bad ones — moments when the genial fire of the soul was liberated, and moments when the artistic faculties could only operate in the hard, cold mechanism of professional routine. Sometimes he seemed lethargic and indifferent. At other times he would put forth uncommon power, and in the ghost scenes and the great third act, would create a thrilling illusion and lift his audience into noble excitement. At its best his performance of

Hamlet exalted the appreciative spectator by arousing a sense of the pathos of our mortal condition as contrasted with the grandeur of the human mind and the vast possibilities of spiritual destiny; and therein it was a performance of great public benefit and importance.

Booth's Hamlet was poetic. The person whom he represented was not an ancient Dane, fair, blue-eyed, yellow-haired, stout, and lymphatic, but was the dark, sad, dreamy, mysterious hero of a poem. The actor did not go behind the tragedy, in quest of historical realism, but, dealing with an ideal subject, treated it in an ideal manner, as far removed as possible from the plane of actual life. Readers of the play of Hamlet are aware that interest in the Prince of Denmark is not, to any considerable extent, inspired by the circumstances that surround him, but depends upon the quality of the man — his spirit and the fragrance of his character. There is an element in Hamlet no less elusive than beautiful, which lifts the mind to a sublime height, fills the heart with a nameless grief, and haunts the soul like the remembered music of a gentle voice that will speak no more. It might be called sorrowful grandeur, sad majesty, ineffable mournfulness, grief-stricken isolation, or patient spiritual anguish. Whatever called, the name would probably be inadequate; but the power of the attribute itself can never fail to be felt. Hamlet fascinates by his personality; and no man can succeed in presenting him who does not possess in himself that peculiar quality of fascination. It is something that cannot be drawn from the library, or poured from the flagon, or bought in the shops. Booth possessed it — and that was the first cause of his great success in the character.

Booth's Hamlet was likewise spiritual. Therein the actor manifested not alone the highest quality that can characterise acting, but a perfectly adequate intuitive knowledge of the Shakespearian conception. It is not enough, in the presentation of this part, that an actor should make known the fact that Hamlet's soul is haunted by supernatural powers: he must also make it felt that Hamlet possesses a soul such as it is possible for supernatural powers to haunt. In Shakespeare's pages it may be seen that — at the beginning, and before his mind has been shocked and unsettled by the awful apparition of his father's spirit in arms — Hamlet is a man darkly prone to sombre thought upon the nothingness of this world and the solemn mysteries of the world beyond the grave; and this mental drift does not flow from the student's fancy, but is the spontaneous, passionate tendency of his soul — for, in the very first self-communing passage that he utters, he is found to have been brooding on the expediency of suicide; and not long afterwards he is found avowing the belief that the powers of hell have great control over spirits as weak and melancholy as his own. A hint suffices. The soul of Hamlet must be felt to have been — in its original essence and condition, before grief, shame, and terror arrived, to burden and distract it — intensely sensitive to the miseries that are in this world; to the fact that it is an evanescent pageant, passing, on a thin tissue, over what Shakespeare himself has greatly called "the blind cave of eternal night;" and to all the vague, strange influences, sometimes beautiful, sometimes terrible, that are wafted out of the great unknown. Booth's embodiment of Hamlet was so thoroughly saturated with this

feeling that often it seemed to be more a spirit than a man.

The statement of those felicities indicates Booth's natural adaptability and qualification for the character. Nature made it in him "a property of easiness" to be poetic and spiritual, according to the mood in which Hamlet is depicted. Hence the ideal of Shakespeare was the more easily within his grasp, and he stood abundantly justified — as few other actors have ever been — in undertaking to present it. The spiritualised intellect, the masculine strength, the feminine softness, the over-imaginative reason, the lassitude of thought, the autumnal gloom, the lovable temperament, the piteous, tear-freighted humour, the princely grace of condition, the brooding melancholy, the philosophic mind, and the deep heart, which are commingled in the poet's conception, found their roots and springs in the being of the man. Booth seemed to live Hamlet rather than to act it. His ideal presented a man whose nature is everything lovable; who is placed upon a pinnacle of earthly greatness; who is afflicted with a grief that breaks his heart and a shock that disorders his mind; who is charged with a solemn and dreadful duty, to the fulfilment of which his will is inadequate; who sees so widely and understands so little the nature of things in the universe that his sense of moral responsibility is overwhelmed, and his power of action arrested; who thinks greatly, but to no purpose; who wanders darkly in the border-land between reason and madness, haunted now with sweet strains and majestic images of heaven, and now with terrific, uncertain shapes of hell; and who drifts aimlessly, on a sea of misery, into the ob-

livion of death. This man is a type of beings upon the earth to whom life is a dream, all its surroundings too vast and awful for endurance, all its facts sad, action impossible or fitful and fruitless, and of whom it can never be said that they are happy till the grass is growing on their graves. That type Booth displayed, with symmetery and grace of method, in an artistic form which was harmony itself. If to be true to Shakespeare, in that vast, complex, and difficult creation, and to interpret the truth with beautiful action, is to attain to greatness in the dramatic art, then surely Booth was a great actor.

Booth's method in the scenes with the Ghost would endure the severest examination, and in those sublime situations he fully deserved the tribute that Cibber pays to the Hamlet of Betterton. Those are the test scenes, and Booth left his spectators entirely satisfied with the acting of them.

If I were to pause upon special points in the execution, — which, since they illumine the actor's ideal and vindicate his genius, are representative and deeply significant, — I should indicate the subtlety with which, almost from the first, the sense of being haunted was conveyed to the imagination; the perfection with which the weird and awful atmosphere of the ghost-scenes was preserved, by the actor's transfiguration into tremulous suspense and horror; the human tenderness and heart-breaking pathos of the scene with Ophelia; the shrill, terrific cry and fate-like swiftness and fury that electrified the moment of the killing of Polonius; and the desolate calm of despairing surrender to bleak and cruel fate, with which Hamlet, as he stood beside the grave

of Ophelia, was made so pitiable an object that no man with a heart in his bosom could see him without tears. Those were peaks of majesty in Booth's impersonation.

Thought is not compelled, in remembering Booth's Hamlet, to stop short with the statement that the thing was well done. It may go further than that, and rejoice in the conviction that the thing itself was right. There are in the nature of Hamlet — which is grace, sweetness, and grandeur corroded by grief and warped by incipient insanity — depths below depths of misery and self-conflict; and doubtless it was a sense of this that made Kemble say that an actor of the part is always finding something new in it; but Booth's ideal of Hamlet possessed the indescribable poetic element which fascinates, and the spiritual quality which made it the ready instrument of "airs from heaven or blasts from hell." The heart had been broken by grief. The mind had been disordered by a terrible shock. The soul, — so predisposed to brooding upon the hollowness of this fragile life and the darkness of futurity that already it counsels suicide before the great blow has fallen and the prince confronts his father's wandering ghost, — was full of vast, fantastic shapes, and was swayed by strange forces of an unknown world. The condition was princely, the manner exalted, the humour full of tears, the thought weighed down with a wide and wandering sense of the mysteries of the universe; and the power of action was completely benumbed. That is Shakespeare's Hamlet, and that nature Booth revealed; — in aspect, as sombre as the midnight sky; in spirit, as lovely as the midnight stars. That nature, furthermore, he

portrayed brilliantly, knowing that sorrow, however powerful in the element of oppression, cannot fascinate. The Hamlet that is merely sorrowful, though he might arouse pity, would not inspire affection. It is the personality beneath the anguish that makes the anguish so stately, so awful, so majestic. By itself the infinite grief of Hamlet would overwhelm with the monotony of gray despair; but, since the nature that shines through it is invested with the mysterious and fascinating glamour of beauty in ruin, the grief becomes an active pathos, and the sufferer is loved as well as pitied. Nor does it detract from the loveliness of the ideal, that it is cursed with incipient and fitful insanity. Thought is shocked by the word and not the thing, when it rejects this needful attribute of a character otherwise eternally obscure. No one means that Hamlet needs a strait-jacket. The insanity is a cloud only, and only now and then present — as with many sane men whom thought, passion, and suffering urge at times into the border-land between reason and madness. That lurid gleam was first conspicuously evident in Booth's Hamlet after the first apparition of the Ghost, and again after the climax of the play scene; but, flowing out of an art-instinct too spontaneous always to have direct intention, it played intermittently along the whole line of the personation, and added weight and weirdness and pathos to remediless misery.

Booth's embodiment of Hamlet was a pleasure to the eye, a delight to the sense of artistic form and moving, a thrilling presence to the imagination, and a sadly significant emblem to the spiritual consciousness. Booth was never at any time inclined, when impersonat-

ing Hamlet, to employ those theatrical expedients that startle an audience and diffuse nervous excitement. Except at the delirious moment when the prince rushes upon the arras, and stabs through it the hidden spy whom he wildly hopes is the king, his acting was never diverted from that mood of intellectual concentration which essentially is the condition of Hamlet. In that moment his burst of frensied eagerness — half horror, and half-exultant delight — liberated the passion that smoulders beneath Hamlet's calm, and it was irresistibly enthralling. There were indications of the same passion, in the delivery of the soliloquy upon the artificial grief of the player, at the climax of the play scene, and in the half-lunatic rant over Ophelia's grave. But those variations only served to deepen the darkness of misery with which his embodiment of Hamlet was saturated, and the gloomy grandeur of the haunted atmosphere in which it was swathed.

Booth's ideal of Hamlet was a noble person overwhelmed with a fatal grief, which he endures, for the most part with a patient sweetness that is deeply pathetic, but which sometimes drives him into delirium and must inevitably cause his death. In the expression of that ideal, which is true to Shakespeare, he never went as far as Shakespeare's text would warrant. He never allowed his votaries to see Hamlet as Ophelia saw him, in that hour of eloquent revelation when, — without artifice and in the unpremeditated candour of involuntary sincerity, — his ravaged and blighted figure stood before her, in all the pitiable disorder of self-abandoned sorrow. To show Hamlet in that way would be to show him exactly as he is in Shakespeare; but

in a theatrical representation that expedient, while it might gratify the few, would certainly repel the many. Real grief is not attractive, and the grief of Hamlet is real; it is not simply a filial sorrow for the death of his beloved father; a mournful shame at his mother's hasty marriage with his uncle; an affliction of the haunted soul because it knows that his father's spirit is condemned to fast in fires and to walk the night. It is deeper still. It is an elemental misery, coexistent with his being; coincident with his conviction of the utter fatuity of this world and with his mental paralysis of comprehension, — awe-stricken and half insane, — in presence of the unfathomable mystery that environs man's spiritual life. Entirely and literally to embody the man whose nature is convulsed in that way would be to oppress an audience with what few persons understand, and most persons deem intolerable, the reality of sorrow. Hamlet upon the stage must be interesting, and, in a certain sense, he must be brilliant; and Booth always made him so. But that noble actor — so fine in his intuitions, so just in his methods — could not be otherwise than true to his artistic conscience. He embodied Hamlet not simply as the picturesque and interesting central figure in a story of intrigue, half amatory and half political, in an ancient royal court, but as the representative type of man at his highest point of development, vainly confronting the darkness and doubt that enshroud him in this pain-stricken, transitory mortal state, and — because his vision is too comprehensive, his heart too tender, and his will too weak for the circumstances of human life — going to his death at last, broken, defeated, baffled, a mystery among

mysteries, a disastrous failure, but glorious through it all, and infinitely more precious, to those who even vaguely comprehend his drift, than the most successful man that ever was created.

Treating Hamlet in that spirit Booth was not content merely to invest him with symmetry of form, poetry of motion, statuesque grace of pose, and the exquisite beauty of musical elocution, and to blend those gracious attributes with dignity of mind and spontaneous, unerring refinement of temperament and manner. He went further, because he illumined the whole figure with a tremulous light of agonised vitality. That was the true ideal of Hamlet — in whose bosom burns the fire that is not quenched. Students of Shakespeare, — who are, of course, students of human life and of themselves, and who think that perhaps they are in this world for some higher purpose than the consumption of food and the display of raiment, — could think upon it, and gather strength from it. Booth's art, in the acting of Hamlet, was art applied to its highest purpose, and invested with dignity, power, and truth.

KING LEAR.

SHAKESPEARE'S tragedy of *King Lear* presents a subject to be approached with reverent humility and studious thought. No task can be more difficult than that of saying the right word on "such high things" as this. The stupendous play, — a vast, turbulent, cosmical representation of the conquest of good by evil, under conditions most piteous and harrowing, — rebukes

the temerity of definition and measurement. The colossal proportions of its great central figure — his passion, his misery, his defeat, ruin, and death — are such as well may awe the mind into silence. Yet the tragedy is produced, and the part is acted, and no doubt the public interest is served, alike in that proceeding and in reflection upon it.

No thoughtful person needs to be told that, in the moral and spiritual scheme of human life there is but little than can be understood. A philosopher might say that this world could just as well have been created for the perfect happiness of the human race as for anything else. Yet all experience has shown that this was not the purpose of nature or fate. The human race is acquainted with happiness, but also it is acquainted with grief. Every one of its blessings is held by the slenderest of threads, and all its footsteps fall upon a gossamer crust of the elements, underneath which is "the blind cave" of night and death. But every thinker is willing to assume the prevalence of a beneficent purpose; and more and more, in the flight of years, every human being realises that affliction and sorrow purify and ennoble the spirit and life of man. Why this should be so we do not understand. Why evil should exist, or ever should prevail, we do not know. Why misery in so many forms, or in any form, should steep many thousands of creatures in tears and gloom and bitterness, we cannot comprehend. All we know is that those are the conditions under which humanity is placed, and that those conditions were created not by man but by his Maker.

This is the mystery of life — and this is the mystery

of the tragedy of *King Lear*, in which the whole awful and pathetic pageant of life is enclosed as in a crystal. And just as in actual human experience the spectacle of a cruel calamity overwhelming the noble and gentle and good of our race, will convulse our hearts with grief, and afterward lift us into a sublime region of moral and spiritual elevation, so, in contemplation of this appalling tragedy, the spectacle of greatness despoiled, love defeated, virtue and sweetness trodden down by wickedness and cruelty, and all that is right and noble and beautiful overthrown and crushed in a tempest and chaos of evil and agony, will have the same effect, — to smite our hearts with a sharp pang of suffering, and at last to lift us out of the weakness and all the other trammels of humanity, and set us free in the triumphant life of the soul. The royal and magnificent king himself, the lovely and loving Cordelia, the faithful and affectionate Kent, the human and gentle Gloster, the true-hearted, sensitive, tender, pathetic Fool, the simple, noble and manly Edgar — they are all delivered to misery, some of them to excruciating torments, and all but one of them to death. Lear's pathway is through the hell of madness. Cordelia is hanged. Gloster, — his eyes torn out, and his old heart broken, — expires in a delirium of joy and pain. "I'll go to bed at noon," says the poor and broken Fool. "I have a journey, sir, shortly to go," says the loyal Kent, who will not survive his master. Edgar alone remains, — but wounded with a grief that never can be healed. The wicked agents of all this misery perish likewise; but this scarcely affects the result. Evil has conquered, and goodness has gone down, in acute, protracted, lamentable an-

guish. The spectacle afflicts, but it ennobles. It is the greatness of the tragedy of *King Lear* that it causes this effect.

The elements and attributes of Lear are not obscurely furnished. He comes before us, at the first, an old man, but not decrepit — a man who is beginning to break, but who is not yet broken. His aspect is massive, majestic, and venerable. He still wears dominion in his countenance. He is exceedingly tender in heart and magnanimous in disposition. His age is that of simplicity and goodness; but his mind is blindly suspicious of its own decadence, and he will prove exacting, irrational, fiery, capricious, and unpleasant, after the fashion of choleric and selfish senility. In the fibre of his character, however, — in his essential personality and interior spirit, — he is, above all things else, large, spacious, and noble. He is not a common man grown old. He must, all his life, have carried the stamp and the magnetic allurement and domination of a great and charming nature. He must have captured hearts and ruled minds by something beautiful and strong in his fate. He does not hold royalty by lineage or by human law alone, but by divine endowment. He is born to the purple. He is a mountain in the midst of a plain; and the crumbling of his mind and fortunes is like the fall of the avalanche. Vitalised with that immaculate and charming excellence, endowed with that innate majesty, and invested with that personal grandeur, he becomes the most colossal figure that ever was reared in the pantheon of the human imagination; and his experience, his suffering, his frenzy, his senile insanity, and the whirlwind of agony in which he dies,

become tremendous and overwhelming. It is not old Brabantio, or old Capulet, or old Shylock who goes mad under the strokes of unkindness, the wear of age, the ravages of tempest, and the human woes and spiritual perplexities of life: it is old Lear; and when that awful figure totters, with streaming white hair and blazing eye-balls, across the thunder-riven heath, under the night, and through the storm, he breaks our hearts, not alone with afflicting sense of the torment into which he has fallen, but of the stately yet lovable nobility from which he fell. King Lear is an august and splendid personality, and he bears the authentic sceptre of sorrow. We see him torn from all moorings and driven out upon the gale-swept ocean-wastes of misery; but it is less for what he suffers than for what he is, that we pity, and love, and reverence, and deplore him. The highest and best elements of our human nature are felt to be crystallised and combined in that woful, terrific image of shattered royalty; and so his misery comes home to us with a keen personal force. There are many denotements of this imperial fascination, which is the pervading and characteristic quality of Lear, and which has enthroned him in the love of the world. It is the soul of the character. It links to the ruined monarch all the virtues that surround his time and person. It holds the heart-strings of the celestial Cordelia. It holds the devotion of the wise and honest Kent. Nothing, indeed, can be more significant of what Lear is than the passionate fealty of this follower, who, "from the first of difference and decay," has attended his steps, and who will not be left by him, even at the brink of the grave.

The drift of Shakespeare is not explained; it is only stated. We can no more assume to comprehend this work than we can to comprehend infinity. But its effect is clearly perceptible; and, since it has that effect, it ought to be read and it ought to be acted. People are better for reading and seeing *King Lear*. Each spectator will derive his own lesson from its pageantry of woe. A perfectly adequate stage presentment of the tragedy will, probably, never be seen — for there are insurmountable difficulties in the way of the essential comprehension of the whole subject by each and every person concerned in its exposition. Much, however, is feasible, and much has been accomplished. The character, feelings, and experience of Lear himself are not obscure. No true student will be baffled by them. The part has been well acted on the American stage, in our time, by Forrest, by Brooke, by Charles Kean, by Charles Dillon, and by John McCullough; and it was acted supremely well by Edwin Booth. It is a character beyond the reach of foreigners, and only to be assumed by a man whose native language is the language of Shakespeare. The failure made in it by Salvini, Rossi, Barnay, and Sonnenthal was a sufficient proof of that.

Booth early selected Lear as a subject for his study, and it was long a close companion of his deepest feelings and most earnest thoughts. At first he acted Lear, — as his father and as Forrest had done, — in the old Tate version, modified by Kemble. Then, in order to forget that, and to absorb the requisite feeling directly from the original, he laid the part aside for a long period. In 1878 he revived it, in his own version of

the original piece. Lear's madness is incipient at the outset, and its development ensues, not upon his dethronement as a king, but upon his desecration as a father. He must be royal, but he must possess a heart more royal than all the crowns and dominations of the earth — a boundless wealth of affection and tenderness. If not, he can neither feel the blow nor utter the response. Lear is often said to be a part within the reach of only a big man. That is a mistake. But Lear requires a great heart. This above all. And then, — since even amid the chaos of his madness the elements of a splendid intellect and a glorious imagination shine forth, like meteors in a tempest, — he requires a character regal with the innate sovereignty of the brain. We never know that brain in its perfection. The blight has begun before the monarch is disclosed. But we must feel it in what we see. That ideal of Lear Booth suggested in his embodiment, and that is the "man more sinned against than sinning" who is drawn in Shakespeare's play. The actor's execution was level with his ideal. He made no points. He never was theatrical. He rose naturally, on the surges of passionate emotion, to the terror of the father's curse, and to the frenzy of the monarch's futile threat. He showed the awful sufferings of a decaying brain which yet is dimly conscious of its own decay, and he showed the vacant, pathetic, terrible levity of accomplished madness. The most electrical moment of the performance was that of the imprecation of "the terrors of the earth." The highest moment was that of Lear's recognition of Cordelia. But it was the splendid restraint of affluent power, all along the line of the work, that made it entirely worthy

in the eyes of judgment — the faculty, which Booth possessed in such felicity, of seeming to be utterly abandoned to his feelings, yet all the while of holding those feelings with a grip of steel, and thus overwhelming an audience, without being himself submerged. It was the human point of view from which he approached the character. His Lear was the fond father and the broken old man. It was the great heart, shattered by cruel unkindness, that he first, and most of all, displayed. But not the less did he express the outraged majesty of Lear, his towering though diseased will, his righteous wrath, and his whirlwind of frenzied passion. Tender beyond tears, forlorn beyond expression, as his acting was, in the recognition of Cordelia, he became, before Gloster's gates, a presence that was terrible; and he broke away, at that terrific speech about "revenges," in a tumult of distracted and abortive fury, as pitiable as it was thrilling, and fully equal with the magnificent situation.

But it was in the two aspects of madness — at first incipient, then accomplished — that he denoted his keenest insight. The sense of relief succeeding the sense of torture, the vague imagery, the broken thoughts, the ghastly, haunting phantoms, and, interpenetrating all, the suggestion of what must have been the massive royalty and celestial goodness of this nature, which is so great, even in its ruin — all was embodied and expressed with absolute truth. In the fantastic garniture of flowers Booth made it plainly and pitiably evident that the sanity of the poor, deserted, heart-broken man is fluent and wandering. That passage and the subsequent surrender are remembered as the perfection

of pathos. The favorite delusion that no one but a physical giant can act King Lear was rebuked in Booth's achievement. Large men, such as Forrest, Brooke, Dillon, and Salvini, have generally been preferred in the part. But Charles Kean was one of the best Lears of the stage, and Booth made it to pass unnoticed that he was of slight frame and medium stature. He looked "every inch a king." Lear is a character of which the peaks stand boldly up, in clear, white light; but the passages which lie between are mostly veiled in shadow; and so they remain, unless the part be acted with a vast ground-swell of emotion, and with a volume of physical force, enormous even in decay, which utters itself involuntarily, without the show of effort. That emotion Booth amply possessed; the exuberance of physique he lacked. Not the less, in the splendid portraiture and suggestion of a true Shakespearian ideal, he employed an artistic method so clear, firm, and free that it seemed entirely spontaneous: no spectator remembered that he was merely acting: and he spoke the glorious verse of Shakespeare with a glittering eloquence that was at once music and beauty.

MACBETH.

CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN said of Macbeth that he is the great ancestor of all the Bowery ruffians. That ancient view of the character has had many exponents and has led to many deplorable exhibitions; but practically it is now discredited and cast aside. Kemble rejected it;

so did Macready; so did Henry Irving; and so, in the mature period of his career, did Edwin Booth. No thinker, perhaps, ought to marvel that it has extensively prevailed; for the intricacy of Macbeth is precisely of a kind that was likely to cause its acceptance. Miss Cushman could only explain to her own satisfaction the discrepancy between his words and acts by assuming that most of the time he was drunk; and of Lady Macbeth's habitual state she had the same opinion. "That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold." But this was an alternative as needless as it was extravagant. In the presence of Macbeth we confront a man whose views are noble, whose language is by turns tender, piteous, poetic, and sublime, but whose deeds are infernal, and whose life suddenly supplements a career of spotless personal purity and admirable heroism with a culmination of frantic depravity and hideous wickedness. He murders the sleeping Duncan. He murders the sleeping chamberlains. He causes the murder of Banquo. He causes the murder of Lady Macduff and her children. He casts the atrocious stigma of parricide upon Malcolm and Donalbain. There is no limit to his iniquity. The obvious view of such a man would apprehend him as a ruffian developed from a hypocrite; and as such, in fact, he has commonly been presented on the stage. But this could not have been the intention of Shakespeare, because this doctrine makes Macbeth merely a butcher in the shambles, or a homicidal lunatic slashing right and left in a crowd; whereas Macbeth is never shown in the exultant commission of a crime, but always in a state of suffering upon the borders of it, and

always as the type of an experience that awakens pity. No spectator would be sorry for the Bowery ruffian. Every spectator is thrilled by Macbeth and is sorry for him. The crimes that he commits are premeditated, and yet when done they are done against his will. He perceives in advance both their monstrous evil and the appalling consequences to himself that must result from them. It is not until he becomes frenzied with desperation that he yields to the mad impulse of indiscriminate and illimitable havoc. Up to that time his condition and conduct present a perfectly heart-rending example of the discomfiture and gradual defeat and ultimate ruin of a great soul that is conquered by the powers of hell.

If Macbeth be judged by his actions, and it be conceded that those actions are done of his own volition, he is a monster. If he be judged by his words he is one of the most imaginative and eloquent of poets. If he be judged by his feelings, he is one of the greatest of human sufferers. The plan of Shakespeare, apparently, was to depict a great and noble nature, containing the germs of evil, and to show it in agony and ruin, under the victorious influence of an infernal malignity. Macbeth, viewed as a man who wades by choice through a sea of blood, may present a terrible spectacle, but he is far less sublime and pathetic, and therefore far less a magnificent creation, than Macbeth viewed as a man of grand attributes, and even of tenderness, helpless in the hands of a cruel and horrible destiny. Macbeth suffers. His capacity of remorse is equal with his capacity of ambition; and as long as a man can suffer remorse the soul of goodness is not yet dead

within him. With every crime that his fiend-driven mind conceives there comes an instant perception of its moral and spiritual consequences and an instant horror of its iniquity — till at length he is submerged in wickedness, and "returning were as tedious as go o'er." Shakespeare knew that human nature, in even its grandest forms, may fail, through an inherent weakness, and that it is always in danger from spiritual agencies of evil. The historic legend of Macbeth, which he found in Holinshed, gave to him the impulse to show this part of the truth of our human life, in a poetic emblem. The tragedy is a crystal, and humanity conquered by sin is the heart of it.

All around the tragedy of *Macbeth* there is a bleak, sepulchral, ghastly atmosphere. The light thickens. The bat wheels and circles. Sounds of lamentation are in the air. Baleful eyes suddenly gleam out of the dusk and suddenly disappear. The presence of evil spirits is distinctly felt. The angel that Macbeth serves glides by on evil wings, unseen, but not unknown. Shakespeare meant this by his ultra-natural machinery — by the witches and the apparitions. Macbeth and his wife are great creatures conquered by fiends. They had, no doubt, evil elements in themselves, at the start. Every human being contains evil elements. But they surrendered to the evil. Shakespeare has painted their surrender, and their awful sufferings in consequence of it. Nowhere else in literature has the pathos of hopeless desolation been expressed as it is in the isolated state of those two wretches, so lonely on the eminence of their guilt that each of them is separated not only from all the rest of the human race, but from the other.

One of them dies, an infuriated brute; the other, a remorseful suicide. Both had been greatly criminal, but both had suffered greatly. Shakespeare certainly must have had something more important in view in writing *Macbeth* than the little scrap of morality which teaches that we must not yield to our evil propensities. He was not a dealer in either platitudes or abstractions. The man and the woman in *Macbeth* are invested with some of the greatest attributes of human nature; and the interest, the weight, the substance, the importance, the meaning of the piece is made dependable upon the display of the ruin of those attributes by the powers of evil. It is a sublime, pathetic, afflicting picture of Fate, and there is no precept connected with it, and no moral to be deduced from it, — any more than there is from a cyclone or an earthquake.

Booth's embodiment of Macbeth underwent various changes, all for the better, as he advanced in experience. At first he gave great prominence and emphasis to the martial aspect of the part. He was the soldier, and his combat, at the close, was superb in its malignant frenzy. Later he gave great prominence to the torn, distracted, convulsed, tempest-haunted state of the helpless human being. His utterance of the contention of good and evil in Macbeth's soul was intensely real and profoundly eloquent — so that it revealed a sufferer and not simply a miscreant, and thus it came home to the heart with a sense of actual and corrosive agony. His personality in the scene of the king's murder had the grandeur of colossal wickedness — a grandeur impossible except to a great imagination greatly excited — so that the terrible strain of suspense was completely sus-

tained and the requisite illusion preserved unbroken. He denoted the haunted condition of Macbeth's mind, furthermore, with absolute fidelity to Shakespeare, especially in his delivery of those illuminative speeches that are so richly freighted with weird and spectral imagery — the seeling night, the rooky wood, the shard-borne beetle, the yawning peal, the winds that fight against the churches, and all those other felicities of language with which the poet has so well revealed the spirit of his conception. The mournful music of Booth's voice was never more touching than in his delivery of the wonderful words upon the fitful fever of life; and certainly the power of his action, to manifest the human soul and to portray the ever-changing torrents of emotion that sweep over it, was never more significant than in the scene with the imagined ghost of Banquo. Booth omitted the actual figure of the "blood-boltered" victim and gazed only on the empty chair; but the spectator saw a spectre in it, from the effect of that appalling vacancy upon that haunted and broken man. The fourth act of the piece — the cave scene — was always tedious, and probably there is more of Middleton in it than there is of Shakespeare. Booth did not use the music, — whether by Locke or Leveridge.

The high view of the character was the view that Booth finally presented. The impersonation was strong and beautiful, alike for truth of ideal, and freedom and vigour of execution. Those observers who watched the growth of Booth's artistic achievements, saw that his Macbeth was much more robust and massive in later than former years — when yet the tragedian was uncertain in his ideal of the character, and therefore

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BOOTH AS IAGO.

vague in his treatment of it. In that part, as in *King Lear*, his advancement was brilliant and remarkable. While making Macbeth a brawny person, however, he not the less enwreathed him with a mystical, haunted atmosphere, and, by giving strong emphasis to the humanity that is woven with the wickedness, revealed the depth of terrible suffering upon which the character is built. At such points as "Now o'er the one-half world," and "Methought I heard a voice cry 'sleep no more,'" Booth attained to a tragic power of tone, a thrilling vibration and wild excitement, not to be described; while his illumination of the character, by means of the pathos that he employed throughout the sequel of the murder scene, was deeply impressive. In the banquet scene his sustained frenzy and delirious passion, before the imagined spectre, unseen by all eyes other than his own, imparted terrific reality to an invisible horror, and were in the highest degree imaginative and powerful. There was another illuminative moment, at the close of that scene — one of those fine moments when the actor merged himself in the meaning of the poet, and thought was personified. Booth, at the climax, presented the fiend-conquered and desolate king, holding the crown in his hand and gazing upon it with eyes that were woful with all the anguish and desperation it had cost. Still another eloquent instant was the pause after "Abide within, I'll call upon you straight" — a pause in which repentance and helpless human agony were seen, for one heart-rending moment, in conflict with the demon that impels his victim to yet deeper deeps of crime and misery. Booth's eloquent delivery of the blank verse was full, resonant, melodious,

sustained, and the verse was made to seem the language of nature without ever being degraded to the colloquial level of prose and common life. His listeners heard from his lips the perfect music of the English tongue.

OTHELLO AND IAGO.

THOSE persons who write upon the plays of Shakespeare must necessarily walk in a beaten track, and no one can be quite sure that the thought which suggests itself to his mind has not been uttered many times already. It ought to be said, however, and it cannot be too scrupulously remembered, that the manner in which a play is represented upon the stage is of less importance to the listener than the spirit of the influence which flows out of the representation. An expert opinion as to whether a theatrical performance is, technically, good or bad may be salutary, but it is much less essential than the mental habit of considering whether the drift of a theatrical performance sets in favour of beauty and right. Breadth of view, directed upon general principles, should transcend the scrutiny of particulars. Comment on the drama is written for the reader, not for the actor. The portrayal of *Othello*, accomplished by Booth was impressive; but, the total effect of the tragedy, with him as with other exponents of it, was that of grim horror and unmitigated affliction. Both in the theme and the treatment of the theme that piece is heart-rending and terrible. The mind cannot dwell upon it without an effort. No one of Shakespeare's great plays is less stimulative to such reflection as a

sensitive mind cares to communicate. You leave a performance of *Othello* with mingled emotions of consternation, disgust, and grief. You feel as if you had seen a murder or attended an execution. This is not the case with either *Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, or even *Richard the Third;* and the reason, probably, is that in no one of those pieces has Shakespeare laid his hand, as he has in *Othello*, directly upon the most harrowing experience that is possible to human nature.

The fundamental topic of the piece is jealousy. Coleridge, that profound and most instructive of all the writers on Shakespeare, long ago noted, for students of such a matter, the elemental difference that Shakespeare meant to show between Othello and Leontes, — his representative victims of this passion. Each is a type of jealousy, but Othello is made jealous against his will, whereas Leontes is jealous by nature. These are the words of Coleridge: "Jealousy is a vice of the mind, a culpable tendency of the temper, having certain well-known and well-defined effects and concomitants, all of which are visible in Leontes . . . and not one of which makes its presence in Othello; such as, first, an excitability by the most inadequate causes, and an eagerness to snatch at proof; secondly, a grossness of conception and a disposition to degrade the object of the passion by sensual fancies and images; thirdly, a sense of shame of his own feelings, exhibited in a solitary moodiness of humour, and yet, from the violence of the passion, forced to utter itself, and therefore catching occasions to ease the mind by ambiguities, equivoques, by talking to those who cannot, and who are known not to be able to, understand what is said to them, — in short, by soliloquy

in the form of dialogue, and hence a confused, broken, and fragmentary manner; fourthly, a dread of vulgar ridicule, as distinct from a high sense of honour or a mistaken sense of duty; and lastly, and immediately consequent on this, a spirit of selfish vindictiveness."

Booth's embodiment of Iago filled the imagination and left the intellect satisfied. His embodiment of Othello was affluent with feeling, eloquent, picturesque, and it was admirable for sustained power and symmetry. Yet it sometimes seemed to lack reality. Booth was a man of slight figure, and he was over-intellectual for that character. In actual life the Moors are not large men; and, judging Othello according to the standard of actual life, he may be fitly presented by a man of the average size. But Shakespeare's Moor is the hero of a poetical tragedy — a tragedy that deals with the facts of life, not in their commonplace, everyday form, but in an exalted and exaggerated form. There may not be a good assignable reason for the preference, but it is certain that the ideal of Othello suggested in the poetic words of Shakespeare, is best satisfied by the presence of a man of large physique. And it is essential, furthermore, that the representative of Othello should convey less the idea of mind than the idea of physical solidity accompanied by wealth of feeling. The Moor is self-centred in personal integrity and calm good-nature, until he becomes a lover; then his whole being is suffused with passionate tenderness; but he is never a thinker. The presence of high mentality in the organisation of Othello would save him unharmed from the hatred and the snares of his enemy. The presence of that attribute, — involuntary and unavoidable, —

in Booth's embodiment of him combined with lightness of stature to invest the performance, noble and right as it was, in plan and feeling, with an air of artifice — as though it were not always in earnest.

On the other hand its characteristic beauties — more especially at a time when a degraded ideal of the Moor was generally accepted as one of the grandest spectacles that ever the stage displayed — were especially worthy of attention and respect. Booth did not make Othello's love for Desdemona a sensual love, nor his sacrifice of her beautiful and blameless life an act of ferocious slaughter, suggestive of the African jungle and redolent of the menagerie. His impersonation was poetic. He made it felt and understood that Othello loves Desdemona with a certain awe and adoration of her heavenly beauty, and in a spirit of humble self-abnegation. There is something almost forlorn in the pathetic devotion of that grand, simple nature, that rugged, stalwart warrior, now become helpless in the hands of a mere girl. And when the night of horror comes, and in the awful calm of despair that has succeeded to frenzy the wretched man must kill what he loves beyond his hope of heaven, it is as an act of inexorable justice, and not as an act of murder, that the blow is struck. Booth's ideal of Othello was the right ideal, and his execution of it kept the smoothness of a bird's flight. The tint of artifice in it — by no means prominent and not always present — grew out of a lack of perfect correspondence between the actor and the part. Yet it was a vindication of the stage tradition that has descended from Edmund Kean, and it was an example to actors of the new age. In

pathos it was potent; and, especially in the third and fifth acts, its art was extremely beautiful. Booth's influence upon his audience was irresistible. At three points he often reached as high an altitude as a tragedian can ever reach, in Othello: in the farewell; in the frenzy, at "Never pray more"; and in the heart-broken desolation of "Had it pleased heaven." Those efforts were extraordinary, and the public always recognised them with responsive emotion.

In spontaneous contempt for goodness and simplicity, — which he regards, without comprehending them, as the attributes of an ass, — Iago undervalues both the strength of Othello's nature and the strength of abstract virtue. It would be an error to deduce Othello from Iago's ideal of him. The Moor undoubtedly is, as Kemble said of him, "a slow man," but he is not a weak one. He must be made formidable, in order to justify the enginery of diabolic intellect that is put in action against him.

Iago is a man without either heart or conscience, and without subservience to even animal passion, who loves evil for its own sake and who revels in the commission of it; but Shakespeare has elevated him, and set him apart from other men, by investing him with a lurid and hideous grandeur — the wicked power of an adequate, proud, audacious, unconquerable intellect. He is not like Lucifer, — "on whose front the thunder-scars were graven," — for the angel, though fallen, is an angel still; immortal in suffering not less than in revolt. But Iago is devoid of soul, is incapable of feeling, is coldly, speciously, sweetly rancorous; and there is nothing in him that arouses, or deserves, one spark of com-

passion. "For this slave," — says Ludovico, — and no one ever dreams of dissenting from his grisly sentence —

> "If there be any cunning cruelty,
> That can torment him much and hold him long,
> It shall be his."

Nevertheless Iago does, and should, inspire that sort of admiration which attends monstrous, glittering, hellish, self-centred strength. It was the felicity of Booth's embodiment of the character that he aroused that admiration; and he did so, not only by technical proficiency of execution at every point, but by a lithe, clean, rapier-like elasticity, both physical and mental, and by a cool, sardonic, involuntary, cruel, veiled humour, which was made to play, like a lambent flame of hell, over the whole structure of the work. In his saying "Pleasure and action make the hours seem short"; in his tone of devotional entreaty, at "Do not rise yet"; in the speciousness of his tender solicitude and bland sympathy, at "Is my lord angry"; in the sweet serenity and inexorable purpose of evil with which he uttered, "I'll set down the stops that make this music"; in the horrible power of his final speech, "From this time forth I never will speak word"; and in the sudden glare of hateful glee and exultation with which he started forward to gloat over the suicide and death of Othello, he made this prodigy of wickedness live in the actual form of nature, as it lives in Shakespeare's page.

SHYLOCK.

BOOTH did not make Shylock a type of religious fanaticism, but a fierce Jew, animated, indeed, by strong emotions of race and religion, but chiefly impelled by personal hatred and greed. The ideal was not pitched at that lofty height which many thinkers, — notably Victor Hugo and Ludwig Borne, whose papers on Shylock are among the best that exist, — have declared to be imperative. It was a Shylock who hated Antonio and wished to destroy him, less because he is a foe of the "sacred nation" than because he is a formidable obstacle in the way of successful usury. Thus it walked upon the earth, and not above it, awakening terror, but inspiring neither veneration nor pity. Booth, indeed, had moments of pathos, when Shylock was expressing the anguish of a father who is sacrificed by filial ingratitude, and the prostration of a proud spirit that is subdued by the irresistible weight of arbitrary power. But the pathos was not allied with either beauty of nature or fineness of conduct: it sprang out of the involuntary sensibility of the actor and out of the musical cadences of his sympathetic voice. The observer received no suggestion of latent sensibility in Shylock, but beheld him as a malignant, vindictive avenger of personal wrong. Booth's expression of the character was marked by lucidity, symmetry, natural identification, and many graces of elocution and action. He dressed the Jew with grizzled hair, a red cap, a gaberdine, pointed red shoes, and otherwise equally correct and suitable trappings. His best effects were wrought with the

passage ending, "It shall go hard but we will better the instruction," and with the jubilant and terrible "I thank God," in response to news of Antonio's misfortunes. There was no rant in the street scene, and there was no theatrical embellishment anywhere along the line of the performance. All was natural, coherent, intense, impressive. The spirit of the trial scene was diabolic. A certain craft and a subtle, grim humour entered into the mental condition of Shylock, and sharply contrasted with its oriental dignity and concentrated passion. The embodiment was fraught with explosive and tumultuous passion in the scene with Tubal — but everywhere else it was as solid as adamant. Booth's identification with the grim, self-centred, revengeful, implacable personality of Shakespeare's Jew was complete, and his expression of it was so spontaneous and smooth that it produced that clear, rounded, final effect of nature which is the crown of illusion. No impersonation could more convincingly demonstrate the authority and distinction of a great actor. In Booth's ideal of Shylock the intense, malignant, ferocious malevolence of the vindictive Hebrew predominated over everything else of human nature that there is in his constitution. Shylock was not made the representative of the Mosaic deity, neither was he specially urged as the champion of the Hebrew faith. He was a Jew, but more particularly he was a man; and while he hated his enemy for being a Christian, he hated him more for being just and benevolent in his dealings — the foe of usury and the friend of cheerful ways. In Shylock's envenomed hostility toward Antonio, Booth indicated something of Iago's loathing for Cassio: "There is a daily beauty

in his life, that makes me ugly." That ideal of the part is simple, direct, and effective. Douglas Jerrold said that Edmund Kean's embodiment of Shylock was like a chapter out of the book of Genesis — meaning that it was austere and terrible — incarnating the idea of religious retribution and the doctrine of an eye for an eye. Booth's assumption of it was a fiend-like man, cold and deadly in outward seeming, but fiercely impelled by the pent-up fires of hatred, malice, and cruelty. The humanity was vitiated, but it was humanity — not religious frenzy. To the expression of that ideal Booth brought intense feeling, a wonderfully expressive countenance, power of eye and voice, lion repose, and the capacity of sudden, electrical action. In the street scene his acting was ablaze with delirium that yet was governed and directed. In the trial scene his presentment was marked by that awful composure of inherent evil which may be noted in the observant stillness of a deadly reptile, aware of its potency and in no haste, although unalterably determined, to make use of it. In that performance, likewise, as in all Shakespearian performances, Booth spoke the text of the poet with beautiful precision and purity. No one of Shakespeare's plays is ever acted, anywhere or by anybody, precisely as it stands in Shakespeare. Booth cut the text with great freedom in making his play-book of *The Merchant of Venice*, and omitted the whole of the fifth act; but Booth never had such a Portia as Ellen Terry, whose exquisite loveliness in that character suffused the whole play with living poetry and made the fifth act, in particular, a gem of brilliancy and beauty, indispensable to the piece.

RICHARD THE SECOND.

RICHARD THE SECOND is almost unknown upon the stage, and it is neglected in the closet. It used, however, to be acted, though never with the concomitant of popularity. Edmund Kean's elocution, in playing Richard the Second, was accounted superb, and Macready's impersonation is recorded as scholarlike and excellent. The elder Booth sometimes played the part, but ultimately discarded it.

Richard the Second came to the throne of England in 1377, when he was only eleven years old; and he died in 1399, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, and the twenty-third of his reign. He was an indolent man, profuse in expenditure, and addicted to feasting; and he wasted the revenues of the kingdom in making ostentatious parade, or in giving bounties to unworthy favourites. He was a weak ruler, not because he lacked natural talents and courage, but because he lacked prudence in design and vigour in action, and was cursed with a violent temper and a supine disposition. In actual life he seems to have been an excessively uninteresting person. He kept numerous cooks and scullions, and, doubtless, ate many good dinners; but he did not possess sufficient stability to admit of his serving even as a successful figurehead. The powerful and arrogant nobles of his time knocked him about the royal sconce with great freedom; and, though he rallied now and then, and dealt blows in return, he was finally discomfited, deposed, and slain.

Shakespeare has given free rein to his imagination

in delineating the character of that monarch, and has expended great wealth of diction upon the portrayal of his disastrous experience. In the pages of the poet he becomes, — apart from shallowness, frivolity, and petulant capriciousness, — a majestic, sad-minded person, by turns passionate and contemplative. His incapacity for action seems almost kindred, as to motive or fundamental cause, with that of Hamlet. Life overwhelms him with its vastness of surroundings and its inherent mystery. Shakespeare has enriched a barren historic tradition with human goodness, poetic sweetness, and many traits of winning character, and has thus made Richard the Second interesting. He has not, however, invested him with the interest of action. The play is a pageant rather than a drama. It begins in 1398, introduces twenty-eight persons, concerns itself mainly with the closing scenes in the king's life, shows much talking and suffering, "dispersedly in England and Wales," sketches a few incidental individuals boldly and briefly, utters magnificent speeches, and leaves the reader sorry for a fellow-creature who suffered much, and still more sorry over the suggested lesson of "man's inhumanity to man." As a history, the play follows Froissart and Holinshed, particularly the latter. Johnson noticed that many passages in it occur in Holinshed. Shakespeare is also thought to have consulted Daniel's poem of *Civil Warres*. The account that the king was starved to death is rejected, in favour of the account that he was set upon and killed by his guards, led by Sir Piers Exton, in Pomfret Castle. It is rather as a poem, than as a history, that the play is valuable.

One reason — perhaps a good one — why the character of Richard the Second has failed to win a public sympathy sufficient to give it enduring vitality upon the stage may, perhaps, be the fact that it has lacked a representative capable of investing it with sympathetic attraction. That attribute was supplied in the performance given by Booth. He was intensely pathetic in the lachrymose speeches of the poor king, and portions of his elocution were marked by noble pomp and mournful beauty.

Booth's impersonation of Richard the Second impressed the imagination more and more deeply, the more it was considered. It was an embodiment of afflicted majesty; the complete expression of a kindly, weak nature, saturated with the conviction of its own royalty, but distracted and tossed about in agonised tumult, by sorrow at the indignities it must suffer, and by resentment against its wronger. This is but saying that it harmonised with the ideal which Shakespeare has, with such beautiful art, imposed upon the cold and barren basis of history. There was something beyond accuracy, however — an element of singularity, that thrilled the performance with living light. Booth's Richard the Second was a man who would attract interest by his distinction, and would arouse sympathy by innate piteousness. His manifestations, during the earlier scenes, were marked by strength, petulance, wrath, and the resolve that should accompany arbitrary conduct: yet all the time there was a quality of forlorn wistfulness about him, seeming to denote that fate had already marked him off for misfortune's minion, and foredoomed him to failure and

ruin. The spectacle of a king's distress at the defection of his subjects — no matter how eloquent the language might be, in which he should express his anguish — could be contemplated with composure; but that king, as personified by Booth, became an object of compassionate admiration. Pity might be won for him, even from a reader of the play, by what he suffers and by what he says; but the quickening of the more ardent emotions is dependent on the human nature that an actor pours into the part; and in that consisted the underlying and pervading excellence of Booth's embodiment. His Richard the Second was suffused with innate goodness, natural majesty, and the tenderness of grief. He was a noble person, unjustly and foully treated. The spectator viewed him with affectionate interest and remembered him as the emblem of misfortune, pathetic suffering, and a will too weak to withstand a turbulent world.

Booth's impersonation, inhabiting a drama whereof the burden is suffering rather than action, did not, except in a few communities, impress itself upon the public mind. *Richard the Second* has never flourished on the stage. But Booth greatly succeeded in presenting a novel dramatic figure, and he was very vital. The embodiment not only affected the feelings while it was passing, but it was found, on retrospection, to have a powerful grasp upon the intellect. The passionate sincerity of it was so profound, and the unity of it so complete, that the observer remembered the unhappy king as a great man whom he had personally known, and over whose bitter suffering he had personally mourned. Part of that result was due to the actor's thorough

identification with a lofty ideal; part of it was also due to that fire of genius with which he burned certain dramatic moments and wonderful words into the memory. I can but mention — for it cannot be translated into language — his majesty and mournful sweetness of action, look, and voice, in the scenes of spiritual fluctuation and mental conflict, in the third act. The "Arm, arm, my name," was given with a splendid force, worthy of the best tradition that attaches to it. The speech, "If he serve God, we'll serve him too," was vibrant with tearful eloquence. The imprecation, "Terrible hell make war upon their spotted souls for this," was shot forth like an arrow of lightning, and is remembered side by side with Hamlet's "Is it the king?" The great speech, "Of comfort no man speak," sounded the very knell of despair. The "I'll be buried in the king's highway" expressed self-pity and the forlorn degradation of ruined greatness as no other voice of our time has uttered them. And the anguish of a great spirit forced to submit to unjust and cruel authority was denoted in the speech, "Your heart is up, I know, thus high at least," with a force and pathos that easily touched the spring of tears. It may be in human nature to disdain the vanquished: no human being who looked on that defeated king could fail to give him respect as well as compassion. One of the most characteristic points was made by Booth with

> "*Down?* down I come; like glistering Phaeton,
> Wanting the manage of unruly jades."

It was in the afflicting abdication scene, however, that he wrought the most potent effect. There the king becomes

delirious with grief, and at that point, accordingly, there is large scope for action. The strain upon the actor is great; for the scene is long, the agony begins at a high pitch and grows constantly higher, the moods vary, and the language is fraught with a sonorous eloquence and loftiness of movement most exacting to mind, heart, nerves, and voice. Booth bore the test in such a way as to make the spectators forget that he was merely acting. The "So Judas did to Christ" imparted a thrill of awe. The "Fiend, thou torment'st me ere I come to hell" was electrifying, and therein perfectly adequate to the dramatic moment and to the aroused longing for a burst of defiance. After that came the image of desolation, in the dungeon scene — a grandly imaginative historical painting, as Booth presented it, in that famous soliloquy on the prison and the world — and then the murder scene, which Booth made dreadfully real, by the lurid impetuosity of his action, and by his heart-rending yell of agony when struck by the assassin's dagger. Booth's Richard the Second was, intellectually, worthy to stand beside his Hamlet — for it was as subtly conceived and as thoroughly executed, and it was equally hallowed with the atmosphere of poetry.

RICHARD THE THIRD.

THE character of Gloster is that worst of human monsters — a wicked man of genius. The ugliness of his soul is symbolised by the ugliness of his body. Bitter, fiery, arrogant, cruel, crafty, impelled by a devilish energy which never halts nor flags, he is determined to rule a world which he despises and contemns, and by which he is feared and hated. His intellect is towering and royal. He looks down upon human passions and makes them his playthings. He uses all men, and he trusts no one. He is alone, and he walks alone, in his blood-stained, haunted pathway to imperial power. He knows himself, and he is never fooled. His hypocrisy deceives others; it never deceives him. He can take on all moods, at will, and can secretly exult over the duplicity of each. He is the wit, the courtier, the lover, the man of the world, the frank, affable companion, the rough, plain-spoken, honest creature, the soldier, the statesman, and the king. Within the black silence of his soul, his infernal genius sits and broods, like a scoffing demon. Something of all this he may have been in life, — if the old chronicles of his reign can be trusted, which is very doubtful, — but Shakespeare has made him all of this, in the consummate ideal of poetry. He can counterfeit piety with the ministers of God; he can sneer at a mother's blessing; and, with heaven-defying blasphemy, he can scoff at himself as "the Lord's anointed." But he is human, and bears a conscience, and through that the ever-watchful Nemesis strikes him at last. During the

earlier and larger part of his career, — although the subtle interpreter of him will indicate that his remorse and his miserable sufferings are almost coincident with his crimes, and are all the while slowly gathering way, — not Niagara itself is more steadfast in its course than is the current of his tremendous and hellish will. But, when his crimes and his remorse are at their worst, a mother's curse smites him, through crown and mail and royal robes, and from that moment his genius begins to wither. His awful deeds rush back upon him. The grave gives up its dead, to haunt him. Fear, — a new phantom, more hideous than the rest, — appals his soul; and he leaps, in fiend-like fury and viper-like malignity, to a desperate and bloody death. Richard is a compound of fiend and man. He suffers terribly. His wife, Anne, says of him, that she never rested in quiet when he was present, because of his dreadful dreams and nightly paroxysms of agony. He is viper enough, at times of action; but there are human drops in his viper blood, and they make him an image of remorse not less than of baleful wickedness. In Cibber he is almost all viper. It is not till toward the last that he breaks; and even then the spectator, — unless he derives illustrative light from knowledge of the original, — wonders at his weakness.

Booth embodied his ideal with the fervent vitality of inspiration. Even when he used Cibber's form he acted in Shakespeare's spirit. The cold malignity, the sardonic ease, the dreadful complacency and alertness of evil were, for a long time, blended into one unshaded current of light; but presently the fiery anguish of remorse burnt through the ice of glittering wickedness,

and the prince became a type of frightful conflict and misery. There was no distortion, whether of limp, or hump, or costume, or elocution, and there was no effort to make points. The lightning-like play of feeling, the quick transitions of mood, the truthful interpretation of Richard's subtle irony, and of his fiery courage, the beautiful pictorial effects of posture and grouping, and, above all, the pervasive fire — those attributes commended the embodiment, with irresistible force, to sympathy and judgment. The crowning beauty of the impersonation was reached in the tent scenes. In the moments when supernatural overshadowings were to influence human nature, the intuitions and the subtle magnetism of Booth lifted him to the level of the highest imagination. He was superb in the delirium after the ghost scene, and he was marvellous in the energy of the final charge and the viper-like plunge of the headlong death.

Booth restored Shakespeare's *Richard the Third* to the stage in 1876–77. Prior to that time he had always presented the Cibber version. His first performance, in New York, of Gloster, according to the original piece, was given at Booth's theatre, January 7, 1878. The ambitious and wicked prince was made to appear, not as a raging ruffian, but as a wily and winning diplomatist, a blunt, frank soldier, an audacious man of action, and, above all, a human being capable of remorse, and redeemed from hellish depravity by that capability of human nature. Booth's Richard was not the expression of so great a nature, in the tempestuous emotions, as that of his father, who, by persons that remembered Cooke and Edmund Kean, was declared

to be the best Richard of the stage; but it was a better expression than was made by any of the old tragedians of what Gloster is, in the pages of Shakespeare. The personal portraiture was life-like. There is a semblance of Richard, in the House of Lords, of which Booth, in that character, was the close reproduction; and he did not overlook that fine description and subtle portrayal, alike of face, figure, and character, which may be read in Bulwer Lytton's illuminative novel of *The Last of the Barons.* Booth's expression of the dissimulative part of Gloster's conduct was beautiful in its diabolic, glittering, serpent-like, specious craft. He was tremendous, likewise, in the electrical moments, as in dealing the doom on Hastings, the repulse on Buckingham, and the threat on Stanley, and in the death scene. But he revealed the whole terrible soul of Richard, and reached one of the loftiest heights of emotion that ever were gained by tragic art, in the agonising soliloquy which rounds the dream scene. The great moments were thrown into great relief — and that was a finer art process than the old one, which, in this character, strove to make all the moments great, and commonly culminated in scarlet and flaring exaggeration. The performance was full of delicate lights and shades, and had a deep, interior quality. When Booth played Richard according to Cibber he made him finer than Cibber's text warrants — because he got the light from Shakespeare to illumine that version. When he acted him according to Shakespeare he was consistent, and he was able to trace in all the fine lines of intellectual wiliness and of humanity which belong to the picture. His utterance of the awful remorse

speech with which Richard wakes from his last sleep was overwhelming in its power and terrible in its depth of woe. Had he done nothing else, that would have stamped the work as an effort of dramatic genius of the highest order. His passion, in the council scene, was electrical. He was almost ludicrously felicitous in Richard's hypocrisy — as in the bit about the mother's blessing, and the scene with the mayor and citizens. His "make me die a good old man," and his "call him again" were the perfection of devilish craft. But he reached a loftier altitude of free genius when he depicted Richard withering under his mother's curse, and, on the night before the battle, moodily aware of his impending doom. In that gloomy and sinister scene he laid bare the heart of the fiend-driven, tortured, agonised, and suffering wretch, with convincing truth and with harrowing emotion.[1]

There are two ways in which the student may test an actor's personation of Richard. One is, to compare it with the standard of history; the other is, to compare it with the standard of poetry. The latter is the true

[1] Shakespeare's *Richard III.* is dubious history, and, although it contains superb passages, and single lines and phrases of great felicity and beauty, it cannot be considered the best order of poetry. Nobody, surely, was ever ennobled by contemplation of the sinister and dreadful hero whom it delineates. It is, however, a great play, because it gives great opportunities for acting. A contemporary actor who might, perhaps, maintain it on our stage is Richard Mansfield. He did not, in his performance, equal Edwin Booth, as Gloster, neither did he discredit the Kean and Booth tradition of the part; but he did much to make it a moral and pathetic force, to invest it with the attributes of humanity, and thus to freight it with impressive meaning. Mansfield's embodiment taught that evil in the human soul, however audacious and puissant, is powerless to oppose the eternal law of final good in the moral universe.

one — for it is not Richard as he is described by More and Hume, but Richard as he lives in Shakespeare, that the actor should try to represent, and that the student naturally expects to see. Those two Richards are not identical. So far, indeed, as the incidents are concerned, by means of which the story of the king is told and the character illustrated, the poet and the historian walk hand in hand. Shakespeare had no Hume to consult; but he had More's Life and Hall's Chronicle, and he apparently had other sources of misrepresentation, which, together with those, Hume subsequently followed. Legendary lore may have been one of those sources — since, when Shakespeare was a boy, aged men must still have been living, who remembered the battle of Bosworth, — at which, indeed, one of his ancestors was present. As to historical facts, poetry and prose possess about an equal authority. But they differ widely in their estimates of character. The Richard of More and of Hume was a ruffian, of the true English bull-dog species. His body was deformed; his countenance was harsh and forbidding; his manners were blunt; he reached forth and took with the strong hand everything that he wanted; he murdered, without scruple and without duplicity, everybody that stood in his way; he was so little crafty that he could scarce even disguise his emotions or his purposes; he lived in a constant savage fret; he was a dangerous bully, and such an out-and-out cut-throat that, even in an age when murder was common, people looked upon him as monstrous, and not to be endured. "This is too ridiculous!" was the exclamation of Artemus Ward's squatter sovereign, when he beheld the mangled remains

of his wife and children, and the charred timbers of his cabin, destroyed by Indians; and that is what the Richmond faction seem to have thought, in their final disposition of Richard the Third. Shakespeare, preserving the superficial peculiarities of that Gloster, has endowed him with a commanding, audacious intellect, wide knowledge of human nature and affairs, ample capacity as a governor, craftiness worthy of Louis the Eleventh, or of Iago, insight, an ardent temperament, and the fascinating quality of a man of genius. That ideal was presented by Booth, — ambition being its motive, and a deformed man's rage against fate its spring of endless bitterness. His method, full of original prompting and informed by wise experience, was singularly beautiful. The transitions, — made with the celerity and vividness of lightning, — showed Richard's subtle wit and devilish irony, his duplicity and his tremendous intensity of purpose and courage, with overwhelming force. The hypocrisy of his "call him again," was so astounding as to be absolutely ludicrous, and his auditors laughed at it, with a shiver of horror. The delirium, after the dream, touched the height of pathos, in its truth and its terrible prostration. And the death — as of some malignant viper — fitly rounded a symmetrical embodiment. Booth's Richard burned with a fierce flame of intellect, grew steadily in development and broadened as it grew, and at every point showed a keen and just intelligence; and, in the closing scenes, it was, to the letter, precisely what Shakespeare meant. Booth's dressing of the part was particularly careful and rich. He wore the sumptuous apparel for which Gloster was distinguished, the long,

brown hair, the ring upon the third finger of the left hand, and he had the habit of sheathing and unsheathing a dagger.

BRUTUS, CASSIUS, AND ANTONY.

SHAKESPEARE'S great play of *Julius Cæsar* was, at an early day, a favourite with Booth, and it remained a favourite with him to the end of his career. On Christmas night, 1871, he revived it, at Booth's theatre, and he presented it there until March 16, 1872. During that run of *Julius Cæsar* the community saw four different ideals of Cassius, three of Brutus, and two of Antony. Lawrence Barrett, J. B. Booth, and William Creswick presented Cassius. Creswick and F. C. Bangs played Brutus. Bangs played Antony. Edwin Booth acted all three of the characters — and in all of them he excelled his competitors, as to the element of sympathy. That was an attribute peculiar to Booth, and it was manifest, to a greater or less extent, in all his performances. It does not necessarily belong to certain parts in which its presence, nevertheless, enabled him to win pre-eminent favour. There is an obvious distinction between the influence of an electrical individuality and the fact of a true painting of character. In Booth's Cassius there was much of the wild Booth spirit, just as there was in his Pescara, his Sir Giles, his Iago, and his Richard. It was full of physical fervour and tremulous emotion; more than that, it was spontaneously poetic. Such a performance, right or wrong, would always be greatly admired. Yet it was somewhat

less true to Shakespeare than the Cassius of Lawrence Barrett.

Barrett's performance of Cassius was not so electrical, nor in method was it so flexible and free. But it was marked by a greater moral fervour and a more ascetic intellect. Its main motive was not so much envy of Cæsar, as bitter, burning hatred of imperial despotism. Shakespeare said that

> "Men may construe things after their fashion,
> Quite from the purpose of the things themselves."

A lofty view of Shakespeare's conception of Cassius may, perhaps, be over-refined. The method of study, however, which puts upon Shakespeare's text the highest interpretation it will bear seems as rational as any — and it surely will bear the interpretation that invests Cassius with a virtuous and commanding intellect. If ever a fine character was exhibited in dramatic action, — one that ought to enkindle the proud vigour of a noble mind and arouse the fiery energy of an ardent soul, — it is that of the great conspirator for the recovery of Roman freedom. Not because he is a conspirator, but because he is a great man. Behind his every word and act stands a grand individuality, inspired by noble purpose. He may be an intellectual ascetic; his nature may have been embittered by disappointed ambition and by saddening study of the qualities and deeds of men; but he is a moral enthusiast, a royal asserter of intellectual liberty. He may be envious of Cæsar; but a profound hatred of tyranny is the basis of his feelings and the spring of his conduct. He pervades the play with a permeative vitality, as the sunlight pervades the blue

dome of heaven. He is the moving and controlling impulse of its plot. Words more heroic than those he speaks to Casca, on the fearful night immediately preceding the assassination, are scarcely to be matched in literature. His purpose is a good purpose to him; and if, as he considers, the means by which he pursues it have an ignoble aspect, they are the only means that can succeed; and, in the end, he atones for the indirection and the crime by an heroic death. Lawrence Barrett carried sympathy with Cassius to the last. There was a human element in him — especially denoted by the manly, tender love that yokes him with Brutus. "It is impossible," says that mourning patriot, speaking over the dead body of his friend, "that ever Rome should breed thy fellow."

Booth's Cassius was comet-like, rushing, and terrible — not lacking in human emotion, but coloured with something sinister. In Cassius he used the "business" of his father's Richard, in the moment after the murder of King Henry, — the "business," namely, of striding, with heedless preoccupation, across the head of the dead Cæsar. It was an embodiment replete with effect. As Brutus, on the other hand, Booth presented an ideal of character more dependent on its absolute truth than its electrical sympathy. There is a gentle melancholy, a sad abstraction, an autumnal pensiveness about the character of Brutus, which render its greatness and its beauty less obvious than they would be if he were wholly a man of action. His mind is tinged with the pensiveness naturally incident to wide range of intellectual vision and large discourse of reason. His temperament is exceptionally

sweet. His conduct is moulded by the celestial sense — which is the sense of duty. His actions proceed deliberately; always from reason, never from impulse. He is tender in heart, imaginative in mind, exemplary in life, stately in demeanour. Such a nature wins, but does not startle. It is more difficult to play Brutus than to play Cassius. Brutus is grander, broader, lovelier, more exalted, and more picturesque; but also, in a certain sense, he is passive. In depicting Brutus, — his ideal gentleman, — Shakespeare made a wonderfully keen and pathetic exposition of internal conflicts. Brutus is quick to suffer but slow to act; and when he does act it is with a reluctance almost as hesitant as the reluctance of Hamlet. Looking upon the world with the wide, intuitive gaze of the philosopher, seeing all sides of all subjects, and making allowance and finding excuse for all, it is difficult for that wise, imaginative, gentle creature to strike the fatal blow, which yet he believes to be necessary and right. Many concurrent forces drive him to the pitch of action; but, from the hour when Cæsar falls beneath his dagger, down to the ghastly day which "ends the work the Ides of March begun," his mind is darkly overshadowed with a sense of impending doom — so keen is his spiritual perception of Nature's inexorable vigilance to punish the shedder of human blood. This nature and experience require excessive poetical sensibility in the delineation. The representative of Brutus must entice affection by his personal quality. With Cassius the conquest is of admiration more than affection, and this is made by means more obviously alert, expeditious, and aggressive. Cassius must be beautifully

refined, in his frosty age and intellectual exaltation; but, beyond that, he is the more directly appreciable because he is a fountain of action. His disturbing force is felt by all persons around him. Even Cæsar admits that he should fear Cassius if he could fear anybody. His tremendous will and his intense, passionate purpose move the many-sided and equipoised mind of Brutus, and give it heat and direction. All things bend to his inveterate vitality. Booth discriminated between the parts, with excellent discretion. The more his Brutus was seen the more it was loved. His slender figure, so appropriate to Cassius [and, as to appearance, the Cassius of Edwin Booth was the most beautiful of all his stage embodiments], had not the massiveness usually associated with the mental and moral attributes of Brutus. The absence of lurid flash and of telling points lessened the effect of emotional excitement. But the actor's spirit was celestial and his art was superb. Booth's Brutus had little significance for the senses; it was full of loveliness for the soul. Booth's delivery of the fine Shakespearian periods was full of grave sweetness and melancholy beauty, and the touching effect of his melodious elocution was deepened by the exquisite grace of his demeanor and gesture, and by his aspect of wasting thought and almost haggard sorrow. One of the most striking qualities of his assumption of Brutus was the lofty and lovely chivalry of his manner toward Portia. In all Booth's acting, in normal characters, his manner toward woman was ever that of innate delicacy and exquisite refinement.

Booth's Antony was a triumph. Success in Antony, however, does not mean so much as success in either of

those associated parts. The character is simpler, and the situations in which it is presented are readily apprehended and utilised. To go back of Shakespeare and resort to history — for which proceeding, except with a view to personal appearance, general accessories, and the particular facts of actual conduct that are treated, there is no warrant — might be to find the real Antony a different man from the type that the poet has delineated. But, since the quality and composition of the character are Shakespeare's — not Plutarch's nor another's — it is with Shakespeare's conception alone that thought is concerned. Booth depicted Antony as a person of politic, reckless, somewhat treacherous nature, yet resolute, strong, and fierce. The lights that are cast upon the character are many and explicit. Antony's talent for crafty policy appears through even the delirium of his grief over the murdered body of Cæsar. Later it finds conspicuous expression in his inflammatory speech, — so wonderfully well devised for its purpose, — to the Roman mob. Still later, in an omitted scene, he is willing to economise as to payment of the legacies in that much-vaunted will of the lamented Cæsar; and he cruelly and ruthlessly condemns his nephew to death, and openly proposes to deceive and befool his associate, Lepidus. Upon his sensuality of life all opinions are agreed. Brutus, who acknowledges him for "a wise and valiant Roman," says, also, that "he is given to sports, to wildness, and much company." Cæsar testifies of him that he "revels long o' nights." Cassius calls him "a shrewd contriver," but "a masker and a reveller." To the lighter and more winning qualities, and to the patrician nobility and refine-

ment of Antony, Booth rendered the utmost justice. The darker shades of the character were judiciously repressed. In the prophesy of war the glowing passion of the actor attained to inspiration. That is the difficult climax, which overtops the climax of the assassination. Booth was noble in it, and also in the delivery of the funeral oration. Better elocution has not been heard — whether considered as to its method, or as a spontaneous expression of the varying emotions of the stormy heart and the wily mind. In execution Booth's Antony was wonderfully symmetrical. Antony is a great man in the tragedy of *Antony and Cleopatra:* in *Julius Cæsar* his deeper nature has not yet been awakened. He is a picturesque demagogue, and as such the actor portrayed him.

Booth took great pleasure in *Julius Cæsar* and after the alliance was formed with Lawrence Barrett, in 1887, he made it a prominent feature in his repertory. The tragedy is one that stirs the imagination with inspiring thought of some of the grandest historic figures that ever genius enshrined in the amber of poetry. It dazzles the mental vision with shapes of antique majesty, and it thrills the pulse of sympathetic appreciation with strains of high and matchless eloquence. Those great lessons with which it is so richly freighted, — the lesson of the value of liberty, and the still greater lesson of the predominance of an inexorable morality of purpose in the vast scheme of human advancement, — are taught by it, with potent authority and invincible force. The splendour of Roman civilisation, with its royal aspects of stateliness and its marked contrasts of aristocratic pomp and plebeian servility, military prevalence and popular

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BOOTH AS RICHELIEU.

resentment, is displayed by it and made actual. The mature repose and autumnal beauty of Booth's mind and art were conspicuously shown in it. In Brutus he was at the flood of dignity and sweetness, self-command, and calm dominance over all the facts of life and death. He not only embodied the character, but by means of that performance he signified his wide range of dramatic faculty, his unerring artistic instinct, and his capacity of self-repression as an actor. The man of thought, if he attract at all, must attract by his personal quality of charm — by what he is, and not by what he does. In this posture personality transcends action. Even in his anger Brutus maintains the poise of an almost stoical nature. He never acts with the impetuosity of impulse, but always with the deliberation of reason. He is sweet in temperament, tender in heart, decorous in demeanour, grave, stately, thoughtful, and calm. He does not startle with emphatic and telling points. His range of mental vision is so wide that he can sympathise with the view of his antagonist as well as with his own view — and the deeds of such a man must necessarily be judicial and neither impulsive nor romantic. Such a man, indeed, is more a spirit than a body — abstract, elusive, rarified, cold. To quench his fire, and to suffuse his embodiment of "the noblest Roman of them all" with a sad grace and mournful pensiveness was, on the part of Booth, to sacrifice instant popular effect for the sake of truth. The sweetness and beauty of his embodiment of Brutus were not at once felt; yet, when all was over, they were remembered. Just so it was, when, years ago, in London, *Julius Cæsar* was acted, with John Philip Kemble as

Brutus and Charles Young as Cassius. Young captured everybody at first, but after a few nights the majesty of Kemble, vindicating the humanity and poetry that are in Brutus, altogether eclipsed him. Booth possessed that majestic quality — that fine solidity of character, "four-square to opposition," and the essential tenderness which appertains to a great heart that has greatly suffered. All that one reads of Kemble's slow, stately, massive walk, in Brutus, as contrasted with Young's quick, nervous, restless pace, as Cassius, was realised in Booth's demeanour in that character, when acting with Barrett. The part requires declamatory treatment at certain points, and the golden purity of Booth's English speaking gave it consummate beauty of expression. His supreme moment as Brutus was that of the apparition — a moment when even the iron composure of the stoic is shattered; but nothing in the performance was more distinctly and convincingly indicative of the actor's power of impersonation than the predominant look of his eyes, in the quarrel scene. The attribute of authority belongs essentially to Brutus, and Booth made it impressively obvious. Such a look, doubtless, that of Betterton was, when he said, "For your life you durst not." Such a look that of Kynaston was, when, as King Henry the Fourth, he said to Hotspur, "Send us your prisoners." No one who watched the varying expression of Booth's countenance as Brutus, or noted the music of his voice, can forget that extraordinary embodiment.

RICHELIEU.

THE artistic and the personal aspects of Booth's acting were closely interwoven, and it is scarcely possible to consider them apart. He was an artist, indeed, who ranged through about twenty-five of the chief characters in dramatic literature — touching Hamlet at one extreme of the chain and Sir Giles Overreach at the other. He greatly succeeded in both Macbeth and King Lear. The capacity of assuming and sustaining diversified and contrasted personalities is one, accordingly, which was not denied to him by even the most exacting judgment. Yet the distinctive quality that illumined his acting was the personal one of poetic individuality. He embodied the creations of genius in literature; but in every instance he suffused them with his personal charm. This was peculiarly true in his assumption of Richelieu, because the part combines so many of the elements that were intrinsic in the man; and, above all, because there was such a deep and exact correlation of temperament between the two. Taking Richelieu, Hamlet, Lear, Iago, and Bertuccio together, the observer had a complete exemplification of Booth, and of his style and method. He was not a "natural" actor, in the sense that he acted as persons do in common life; but he was a natural actor in a much higher sense — because he produced the effects of nature by artificial means, by the legitimate exaggerations of art, while always sustaining himself in an ideal region. He was possessed, moreover, in superb abundance, of those means of utterance — the powerful eyes, the mobile

face, the flexible, sonorous voice, the intense concentration of eloquent repose, and the force and grace of electrical movement — which render acting not only a process of the intellect and the feelings, but an actual and adequate physical expression of what is passing in the human soul. Given the great situation — as in the fourth act of *Richelieu*, or the awful ghost-scenes of *Hamlet*, or the burst of explosive and deracinating frenzy in which Lear finally breaks away from his inhuman children — and the actor filled it, as well for the eye and ear as for the imagination and the mind. This is to exert poetic inspiration, while controlling and directing, with distinct mental purpose and unswerving skill, the personal impulses and mechanical adjuncts that constitute the machinery of dramatic art. And this is what made Booth a great actor.

Booth's performance of Richelieu was unique and original. He originated the stage treatment — the general scheme and drift of artistic illustration — which that character now receives, whenever it is attempted. He had no model in it, for he never saw either Macready or Forrest act it, — who were its first representatives, the one in England and the other in America, — and his father's attempt in it was farcical. He built up its physical structure out of his imagination, investing it with a sublime mournfulness of isolation upon the summit of power, and touching it with the lights of grim humour and exquisite, courtly grace. As a type of stage illusion his performance of Richelieu was perfect. He saturated the leonine nature of the Cardinal with a gentle and lovely melancholy, not weak, but as lofty as it is tender, and such as hallowed the character and

made it as magnetic to the heart as, in its weirdness, it was entrancing to the imagination, and as, in its tremendous power, it was impressive to the mind. Those moments in which the solitary old man remembers his lost youth and the dying friend who committed a daughter to his paternal care, and those in which he ruminates upon his age and loneliness — the moments, that is to say, in which the heart irradiates the brain — are brightly illuminative of the nature of Richelieu; and of those Booth perceived and imparted the full significance. He did not strive to be literally historical — although his personal resemblance, when made up for the part, to a bust of Richelieu which stands in the Louvre, was exact — but he kept close to the poet's ideal of sympathy with all that is virtuous, innocent, beautiful, noble, and right; and that ideal he made alluring by the charm of personality. Other actors have made Richelieu correct; have produced startling effects at specific points; have shown a right instinct as to his force of will, his grim humour, his little vanities, his indirection, his sacerdotal pride and pomp, his intellectual poise, his energetic temperament, his kindliness, and his craft; but Booth, alone in our time, invested him with a sustained, irresistible fascination. The performance was completely illusive. It caused the stage to be forgotten. It presented a great man; and, as is always true with genius, the greatness of that priest and ruler was seen, or, rather, was felt, to be personal, and not official; inherent in himself, and not dependent on his place and adjuncts. Richelieu, as a mere fact, is wise virtue contending against vice and treason; strength protecting innocence; and, therefore, naturally,

is stimulative of human sympathy. But abstract righteousness alone might neither interest in itself nor gladden in its triumph. Richelieu must be much more than good, and the result of a portrayal of him must far exceed complacent satisfaction. Booth gave him the potency of innate charm; made him lovable by a grace that was ingrained and a beauty of the soul that hallowed and exalted — not only the man himself but all who beheld him. To that actor was known the austere majesty and sad isolation of a thinker who is poised above his time. By him was understood the loneliness of the unselfish heart which, grown old in sorrow, no longer nourishes the least hope or dream of happiness for itself, but lovingly impels endeavour for the happiness of others. It was noble and beautiful exaltation of spirit that made Booth's embodiment of Richelieu at once fascinating and beneficent. The acting, also, gave exquisite touches of deft simulation. The refinement of it suggested the gossamer texture, the aristocratic hue and the faint fragrance of old lace. Even in its moments of banter, or what might almost be named frivolity, it was permeated and controlled by perfect taste. Booth was especially fine in the delicate tracery with which, during the first act, the character is unfolded, and in the delivery of the soliloquies. To be adequate in soliloquy is more difficult on the stage than to be adequate in anything else, and our generation has not seen Booth's superior in the utterance of it.

In the character of Richelieu the thoughtful, poetic quality of Booth's acting, together with its vital spirit, magnetic power, and complex, delicate, polished, and always seemingly spontaneous mechanism, were impres-

sively displayed. There has been no nobler figure on the modern stage — no figure more fascinating in the contrasted elements of its constitution. It was grandly austere, and yet tenderly romantic; solidly founded on the repose of the philosopher, yet fiery with the knightly valour of youth; full of the pathos that invests a lonely spiritual exaltation — the mountain solitude of wisdom and of conquered sorrow — yet lovingly human, and sensitive to every wafture of joy and grief in the common lot of mankind. Lofty and fair as an ideal of powerful goodness protecting the weakness and innocence of imperilled virtue, it easily carried the affection of human hearts; but its supreme excellence was the realisation of an ideal trait — the attainment and expression of the majesty which is possible to a human soul, when, through an ample experience of the conflicts of life, it has risen above all the hopes and fears, all the doubt and weakness, all the passions and feelings of mortality.

And this was an excellence that art alone cannot supply — a radiation of the spirit of the man within the actor, passing into the character that he assumed, because awakened and lured by a kindred tone in the character, and thus filling and suffusing it with a sublime light. It is not alone significant that Booth built up the part with delicate mechanism; that he sustained the identity so well as to make his spectator forget that it was a fiction; that he was splendidly vehement in the towering and awful anathema of the Church; but that, behind the trained power, skill, and many accomplishments of the actor, there was in him an exuberant wealth of the imaginative temperament of

genius, never growing dim or weary, never lapsing into routine mannerism, never inadequate to invest a creation of literary fancy with the stately person and the lofty soul that alone can give it a dramatic existence. The wonder is often felt that an actor should be able to continue, night after night, playing the same part: it is not remembered that this capacity of imaginative living, this inexhaustible temperament of fire and action, is precisely what constitutes the actor's natural wealth, and authenticates his personal preordination to the pursuit wherein he lives. The spectacle of Booth's Richelieu, fine as it was when viewed as art, engaged and impressed thought far more as the exponent of dramatic fitness and a matchless equipment for characters of ideal majesty. The applause that so often hailed his exploit — ringing through the theatre in bursts of lofty cheer — was not for either the general accuracy or the special points of Richelieu, but was the quick, bright, natural, ungovernable response to the eloquence of genius.

BERTUCCIO.

PHYSICAL deformity has seldom been borne with patience. It reacts on the nature that it incloses. It saddens or it embitters. A deformed man is usually reticent and secretive. He shrinks from contact or observation. He suspects, on every hand, pity, contempt, aversion, or ridicule. He is morbidly sensitive. He withdraws his life from the obvious and sun-lit pathways of the world, and dwells in solitary and sequestered places; and there he nurses his emotions, whether

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BOOTH AS BERTUCCIO.

of love or hate, till they acquire intense strength. If he be a man of deep heart and proud mind, and if his nature be illumined by the light of genius, he will develop an amazing individuality. Pope and Byron come out of literary history as apt examples of that truth. Those, of course, are exponents of an exceptional class; but as the same human nature runs through all classes the same general results are apparent in all the victims of deformity. The deformed man is placed at a disadvantage, and the cruel fact shapes and colours his whole experience. That experience, accordingly, attracts the analytical student of life, and stimulates the imaginative literary artist, by suggesting sharp dramatic contrasts. Sir Walter Scott has delineated phases of it, with great vigour of treatment, and in a beautiful atmosphere of romance, in his novel of *The Black Dwarf*. Other authors have touched upon it, with more or less success; but no other great writer seems to have brooded over it so deeply as Victor Hugo has, for the purposes of art. To remind the reader of his Quasimodo is at once to illustrate this meaning and to suggest a representative embodiment of this exceptional individuality. Bertuccio, in *The Fool's Revenge*, is, in some respects, a companion portrait; and certainly it is one of the most affecting images in literature, of the misery that laughs.

The *Fool's Revenge* fulfils the purpose of tragedy — for it overwhelms the mind with terror and the heart with pity, and therein it tends to elevate the moral and spiritual being. It thus exercises as much beneficent force as can be expected to flow from this form of art. It is neatly constructed, in three acts, and tersely

written in serviceable blank verse. Its author, Tom Taylor, claimed it as substantially an original work, but he named Victor Hugo's *Le Roi S'Amuse* as its basis. The drift of it is a rebuke of the wickedness of human quest for revenge. The lesson of it is the ancient Hebrew Bible lesson, that vengeance is an attribute to God. Its central figure is a deformed man, austere in mind, but tender in heart, who first is embittered by the natural reactionary force of his deformity, and then is tortured into a demoniac condition, by a foul, treacherous, oppressive, and cruel spoliation of his domestic peace. That exceptional type of man it presents under the stress of love, misery, wrath, and hatred. The wretched creature has been crazed by the forcible abduction of his virtuous and faithful wife, and thereupon he instigates a ruthless villain, — in whose service he lives, as a court jester, the scene and time being Faenza, in Italy, 1488, — to abduct the wife of his enemy. In that hellish work he personally assists; and thus, by a series of strange accidents, he becomes instrumental in betraying his own daughter into the hands of a libidinous and detestable swine. He rescues her, indeed, at the last; but not until he has passed through the torments of hell, and only when the star of his life goes down in a storm of frenzy and a sea of murder.

That wretched man and those actions and emotions Booth depicted, with tremendous vigour and appalling sincerity. The first strong situation of the piece, — occurring at the end of the second act, — exacts a tumultuous utterance of sardonic exultation and demoniac glee, over the success of a scheme of wicked vengeance. It is a night scene; and the deformed

jester pervaded it like a raving fiend. The next, — a more terrible crisis, occurring near the end of the piece, — exacts a union of gleeful frenzy with delirious despair, the quick agony that laughs, and the laughter that flows in tears. In those situations Booth yielded up his mind to the splendid fires of natural human passion. Body, soul, action, voice, all the accumulated felicities of art and all the resources of goodness and sensibility were commingled and poured forth, in a concentrated, indomitable flood of eloquence; and the observer obtained, with shuddering awe, one of those glimpses into the deep foundations of human nature that make us wiser in comprehension of the strange material of which we are made, and the illimitable possibilities of spiritual life that stretch away before us.

SIR EDWARD MORTIMER.

COLMAN'S tragedy of *The Iron Chest* is interesting as a type of a kind of dramatic literature in which our forefathers, of a hundred years ago, found pleasure. It was toward the end of the last century, as readers of stage history are aware, that true melodrama — the admixture of serious play and music — attained to its most prosperous growth; and it was then that *The Iron Chest* was produced, at Covent Garden, London, with Kemble in the chief part. Many of the persons who participated in its performance then, and for a long time afterward, were singers. The humorous man sang, and so did the poacher's daughter. The juvenile Wilford joined in a duet with his lass; old Adam

Winterton warbled a little; and there was a company of robbers, lodged amid the ruins of an ancient abbey — the scene being laid in the south of England, in the lovely fields of Kent or the smiling woods of Sussex — that sang, in capital chorus, —

> "Jolly friars tippled here
> Ere these abbey-walls had crumbled;
> Still the ruins boast good cheer,
> Though long ago the cloisters tumbled."

This sort of play appears to have prevailed for about one generation; but in time the public taste grew weary of it, and, aside from *The Iron Chest* and *Guy Mannering*, scarcely a genuine melodrama of the old school has survived, in actual use, to the present day. Even these are always cut, when acted, and that treatment of them has long been usual. *The Iron Chest*, as performed in our day, is shorn of its incidental music and also of its band of picturesque robbers, grouped in the moonlight, beneath the broken arches and among the mouldering, moss-covered, ivy-clad stones of its ruined English abbey.

The essential dramatic vitality of the piece, however, is independent of accessories. With an actor competent to play Sir Edward Mortimer, *The Iron Chest* would hold a place upon the stage. It presents its central character in situations that admit of vigorous dramatic execution, and it invests him with the unfaltering charm of romantic atmosphere. Sir Edward Mortimer is a thoroughly noble person, capable of all goodness and worthy of love and honour. But he has committed homicide. Under terrible provocation, and in a moment of frenzy, he has stabbed to the heart "the sinewy savage" who

had struck him down and trampled upon him in a public place. He has escaped detection and has kept his secret. But remorse is gnawing at his heart, and in every minute of his life, by night or day, sleeping or waking, the dread of discovery haunts his soul. The passion of his mind is love of honour — to hold a fair renown in the eyes of men, and to leave an untarnished name, when the grave shall have closed over his ashes. In his prophetic fear that, after his death, if not before, the hideous secret may come to light, he has written a confession and defence, and this he must perpetually guard, in his Iron Chest. By chance it once seems on the point of disclosure. His startled and apprehensive soul takes needless fright. He springs to his own rescue. He will defeat the purpose of Fate, even though he pursue an innocent youth to ruin, disgrace, and death upon the gallows. His state suggests the apt words that Shakespeare has put into the mouth of the remorseful Queen Gertrude: —

> "To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
> Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss;
> So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
> It spills itself in fearing to be spilt."

His anxiety and his insane turpitude defeat their purpose, and, in the revulsion of feeling consequent upon a revelation alike of his crime and his wicked machinations of self-defence, he dies in a paroxysm of horrible anguish. There are several splendid moments in the tragedy, for this shipwrecked and wretched man; but the strong situations are those in which Sir Edward Mortimer tells his story to his secretary, Wilford, —

who has half discovered the secret, — and in which the baffled murderer expires.

Booth, in aspect, in temperament, and in the knowledge of grief, filled that character as if he had been born for it, and for nothing else. From the moment when Sir Edward's solemn voice was first heard, speaking "off the scene," an atmosphere of dread and terror seemed suffused everywhere, as by the unseen presence of a guilty, haunted, fore-doomed, suffering, but proud, resolute, indomitable, and splendid human creature. The tone was the suggestive, ominous tone of impending horror, nameless but ghastly, and infinitely pathetic. And thereafter, as the play went on, genius, with its profound intuitions, and dramatic art, with its superb skill, set clearly forth the awful phantasm of a life that sin and suffering have isolated from companionship with the human race. In its expression of this bleak isolation it was among the most pathetic images that ever the stage displayed.

To any actor, however experienced, there must be uncommon difficulty in the way of playing Sir Edward Mortimer — for the part begins at a high pitch of restrained nervous excitement; it is written in a somewhat inflated and flowery strain of blank verse; and it abounds with "flaws and starts," instantaneous transitions from level speaking to hysteric ejaculation, and from forced repose to wild excitement. The man is dying, by inches, from a grief that he must conceal, and from an inward convulsion of opposite feelings, for which there is no relief but death. Booth met the difficulties of that ordeal with astonishing ability, and from the first spring upon the startled Wilford, at the blundering

reference to murder, down to the dreadful paroxysm of mortal agony with which the piece closes, he held his audience spellbound in eager and painful suspense. The illuminative speeches are the apostrophe to honour and the denunciation of curiosity. Those were spoken with all the passion of Mortimer's lacerated heart, which has lost the one and suffered by the other. The scene of the confession passed in a whirlwind of stormy vociferation. The death, without being protracted, and without excess of physical misery, was appalling as a picture and wonderful as art. But perhaps the crowning excellence of the embodiment was the actor's truthful and impressive expression, — in face, demeanour, condition, manner, and speech, — of the weight and majesty of character that are consequent, in a noble nature, upon settled and hopeless grief, combined with the mingled wildness and lassitude that forerun the dissolution of mortality. The audience, when last I saw this old drama, — a numerous and brilliant one, including many of the old play-goers who are walking beneath the silver flag, — was deeply moved; and at the fall of the curtain Booth was recalled with cheers.

PESCARA.

Among the dramatic works of the past that have kept their hold upon the stage through a long period few are so dark and dreadful, in spirit, incident, atmosphere, and imagery, as Shiel's tragedy of *The Apostate*. That play has attained to the venerable age of more than three-score years and ten; it still is

occasionally acted; and, probably, it will keep a place in the practical repertory of the theatre as long as a tragic actor can be found who is competent to embody its most striking character, Pescara, with the robust force, the grisly malignity, the infernal cruelty, and the horrible, glittering speciousness that the part requires. In its original form *The Apostate* is a tragedy. Pescara falls by the hand of Hemeya; Florinda dies by poison, which she has swallowed in order to escape from the threatened nuptials with Pescara; and Hemeya also dies by suicide. There is no dramatic necessity, however, for sacrificing the lovers, at the end, and the practice of the stage has usually been to conclude this story of horrors with a happy close, — by which means the darkness of a terrific picture is much and gratefully relieved. The vicissitudes in the experience of the lovers, and in that of the old Moor, Malec, are brought about ingeniously, and are displayed with pictorial rapidity of movement. The apostasy of Hemeya and his subsequent rebellion lead to situations of exciting suspense, and become effective weapons in the hands of the adroit Pescara. The character of old Malec is finely drawn, and the sweet paternal and filial relation between him and Hemeya is portrayed in a spirit at once tenderly human and romantic. It is Hemeya who, at the risk of more than his life, rescues Malec, and it is Malec who, at the close, rescues both Hemeya and Florinda. In the original piece the question of Moorish consequences resultant upon Hemeya's apostasy is set at rest by his suicide. In the stage version this remains unsettled. But that is a trivial flaw. The play should be viewed

as something disclosed through an ideal atmosphere. The black shadow of the Inquisition impends over it, and out of its sombre background dimly glimmers the stealthy, crafty, furtive, dangerous, repulsive figure of Philip the Second, of Spain. The tone is ultra-romantic; yet this play has a certain value, as bearing on the illumination of an historic period.

It may be doubted, however, whether the presentation of a type of human nature so hideous as Pescara can have a good effect. He is a depraved and dreadful ruffian, malignant, hateful, cruel, obdurate, treacherous, animated by loathsome lust, and alternating, in his mood, between cold, ingenious malice and savage fury. But the piece was not written for Pescara. It was the heroine, Florinda, upon whom the author bestowed his best of feeling and imagination. The beautiful Miss O'Neil was to play the part, and did play it, and Shiel, like many another man of his time, was infatuated with that prodigy of tearful loveliness. In Florinda all the virtues and all the graces are combined. She is the most affectionate and dutiful of daughters; the most romantic of maidens; the sweetest and most ardent of lovers; the most noble and heroic of women, alike in her principles and her conduct; and she appears, in fine raiment and long hair, in every important juncture of the story, at the most impracticable of times and the most impossible of places. It is only because Pescara acts, while Florinda suffers, that the demon has surpassed the angel, in a dramatic point of view. Evil is restless, and, when combined with intellect, it is brilliant; but goodness is apt to be submissive, inert, and insipid. Besides, Pes-

cara, on the stage, has all along been embodied by men of genius. The elder Booth, to whom the part was first allotted, refused to act it, and it was assumed by Macready; but Booth afterwards played it, and made a great fame in it; and Edwin Booth retained it in his repertory, and for the most part sustained, as Pescara, the tradition of his father's greatness. Booth invariably conquered admiration by one attribute in which he was pre-eminent — the faculty to assume a sweet placidity of ingenuousness, veiling, but not concealing, a cool, airy, infernal depravity. That was seen in his Iago and his Richard the Third; but in those parts the artistic hypocrisy is intended to deceive, and it does deceive. In Pescara, on the other hand, the lurid light of hell is allowed to play freely, just beneath the mocking "smiles and affability" of simulated kindness. The intention of Pescara is to terrify, even while he pretends to soothe; and in Booth's acting that attribute of dangerous, jeering, menacing duplicity was so terrible that often it impelled the spectator quite over the line of terror, into the shuddering mood of hysterical laughter. In the story of the dream and in the quarrel with Hemeya that predominant attribute of the character was made brilliantly visible. Booth proved entirely adequate at the thrilling points of the performance — the famous entrance, to part the lovers; the equally famous "There shall be music, too"; the baffled cry of "damnation," and the scene of the torture and rescue. There was no effort made to reconcile the character to any accepted standard of human nature. There is, however, but too much reason to believe that such men have existed and do exist. Booth's first appearance in *The*

Apostate was made in his boyhood, at Wilmington, Delaware, where he played Hemeya. His father acted Pescara, and in that, as in some other characters, his father was his model.

LUCIUS JUNIUS BRUTUS.

THE question as to the relative excellence of specific personations, — determinable through comparison of the several works of an actor, — though often strenuously discussed, is less important than the large, comprehensive question as to the excellence of his influence upon the age in which he lives, expressed in his adequate fulfilment of noble ideals, and in his liberal diffusion of virtuous emotion. The puissant embodiment of such characters as William Tell and Lucius Junius Brutus does more to keep alive in the popular heart the love of true liberty and the sense of its inestimable worth, than could be accomplished by almost any combination of the wisest and strongest forces of the age. The observer will, of course, consider that the author of *Brutus* has not made his ideal either a vast or a representative one, and that to try a personation of Brutus by the standard of the piece itself is not, — as so often is the case in Shakespeare, — to try it by the standard of universal human nature. Brutus is exceptional, abnormal, and of an artificially mixed condition, — albeit the fibre of nature runs through him. An actor, accordingly, may take large license in his interpretation.

In its possibilities for acting, the part is greater than the piece, for it comprises some of the attributes that

constitute the character of Virginius, and thus it kindles in an actor the robust manliness, splendid dignity, and heroic exaltation that make the perfect ideal of the Roman father. Both men are depicted as fine, tender, simple, magnanimous, just; both are patriotic; both sacrifice all, for the public welfare; each destroys his only child; each perishes of a broken heart, under a weight of misery so terrible that human nature cannot bear it; and in each case there is the element of insanity, — that of Virginius being real and that of Brutus being assumed. But, while certain of the attributes of character are coincident and certain lines of the experience are parallel, the identities of those two Roman heroes remain distinct, and a competent actor will evince fine intuition and conscientious thoroughness of artistic study in giving to each a separate individuality. Brutus should not be made as delicate in fibre or as sweet in temperament as Virginius, for the life of Brutus has no sunshine in it, but only wrong, violence, and discord. Repressed passion has warped it; suffering has despoiled and blighted it; long brooding over the purpose of revenge has embittered and hardened it; long simulation of madness has given to it a sardonic light. Virginius, on the threshold of the story, has already won, by the fascination of love. Brutus, beginning at once in a bitter and afflicting assumption of gleeful delirium, wins by the fascination of terror. It is not till the thundercloud has burst and the lightning launched its bolt that the spell of human tenderness begins to make itself felt — through the workings of the father's heart, and in that awful climax of heroic misery which is at once his victory and his death.

Booth manifested an unerring intellectual purpose in individualising Brutus, so as to make terror paramount above pathos, and to crown a life of remediless suffering and consecrated struggle with a death of awful sublimity. Virginius, — a part that Booth never played, — lives in the affections; Brutus in the imagination. The one burns with a steady light, and is massive and lovable; the other shines with the portentous glare of the midnight beacon, and is rugged, wild, and brilliant. If the crime upon which the story of *Brutus* is made to rest were not of such a sinister and odious character, — so foul, hateful, and shocking, — the tragedy would, no doubt, be held in higher esteem. But, in that respect, its suggestions are very horrible. The piece suffers, likewise, from defective construction. Payne's *Brutus*, as theatrical students are aware, is, to some extent, a cento of different works, and for that reason it produces the effect of a series of episodes of Roman history, rather than a single dramatic narrative. The story of Brutus, the story of Lucretia, the story of Tarquinia and Titus, and the story of Tullia are all knotted together in it, and the latter half of its action is almost disjoined from the former half. The consequence is that, in the reading of the piece, attention is somewhat distracted from a central figure, and Brutus seems to be several persons rather than one. To neutralise this diffusion of interest, the actor must, in a representation, so dominate the part as to fuse all its elements and phases together, and make it a unity. To show the steady radiance of reason behind the glare of lunacy, to reveal in fitful glimpses the majesty of iron virtue beneath the vacant aspect of jocular imbecility, to be

always one splendid and terrible personification of ideal heroism, while seeming to be a broken and heedless wretch, was to offer a great and thrilling embodiment, and that Booth presented. The execution was invariably that of clear-sighted art fulfilling a definite purpose. No actor worthy of the name could go through the tempest scene of Payne's tragedy without tremendous emotion. Edmund Kean gave the curse on Sextus in a gasping whisper, all the while clutching convulsively at his throat, as though strangling with passion: and the effect must have been terrific. Booth subdued the tumult of the situation, and augmented its power, by intense concentration, and a low, restrained, but incisive and righteously vindictive utterance, withering, ominous, dreadful, and set off by action that fully conveyed the delirious ecstasy of implacable vengeance. That was the brilliant climax of the tragedy. But the supremely fine part of Booth's Brutus was the judgment scene, — which exhibits the patriot's passionate sense of duty, predominant, through a dreadful struggle, over the tender promptings of the father's affectionate heart. The stage never offered anything nobler than that image of moral greatness triumphant in heart-rending grief. The situation, — a broken-hearted father condemning his beloved son to death, for the good of the commonwealth, — would, of itself, do much to allure pity: but only a manly and tender nature could undeviatingly sustain the burden of the scene and keep the illusion unbroken. Volumes of reasoning could not be so eloquent as that single work, to avouch the dignity of dramatic art and the social beneficence of a well-ordered stage. The beautiful delicacy of Booth's acting, in the

first scene between Brutus and his son Titus, always cast upon his audience the glamour of impressive solemnity. The sudden access of tenderness, — at once restrained by prudence, — and then the resumption of levity, made up an image of such forlorn misery as no heart could resist. There was invariably a hush of suspense throughout that scene, and at its close a tumult of enthusiasm. The address to the populace, in act third, was an extraordinary example of passionate eloquence, specifically illustrative of the actor's resources of voice, together with his massive pose and large gestures, and his quick sensibility to movements of inspiration. During the judgment scene the strained excitement of the auditor became that of painful grief. Not a touch of the actor's consummate art was lost, and every tone of his deep, tender voice, — most melodiously and touchingly sad, — found its way to the heart.

ON BOOTH'S ACTING IN VARIOUS CHARACTERS.

One of the gravest difficulties in writing about the stage is the need that the occupation seems to impose of universality of sapience and finality of judgment. No man can so entirely comprehend the works of Shakespeare, — in all their height and depth of meaning, and all their variety and subtlety of suggestion, — and, at the same time, so thoroughly probe the natures of the actors who pass before him, as to be able to settle all questions as to compatibility between the two. Some of Booth's Shakespearian ideals may not have matched

exactly with Shakespeare's conceptions. There was room for refining on that subject: but that pen would indeed be tedious which should, in observance of his inequalities of condition, follow him through all the great parts that he played. The intellectual concentration, the fiery force, the moving eloquence, the poetical tone, the innate human goodness and sympathy, and the exquisite grace and finish of his acting were displayed in all of them. He varied much in his spiritual altitude and physical state; but his abilities, and his use of his abilities, were noble; and the public benefited, in the enjoyment of his works, by the best influences that flow from the stage.

Reflection upon Booth's Hamlet recognised, with deep delight, its poetry and spirituality of ideal and its pervading grace of executive treatment. The actor who would truly represent Hamlet must succeed in depicting a condition of misery so profound that it burns and glows with the vitality of its action upon the burdened and tortured soul. There was hopeless dejection in Booth's Hamlet; there was remediless grief; there was an overfraught sensibility, which, more than once, — in its tremor, under the vast and awful mysteries of the universe, and its confused and perplexed apprehension of its own woes, — lapses into delirium; but there was no languor; and from first to last the personality, unique and invariably sustained, was majestic, noble, forlorn, lovable in its wasted sweetness, pathetic in its ruined hope, and grand in its poise above the delirium of a haunted mind and the havoc of a despoiled and defeated life. Booth acted Hamlet so often and so thoroughly that his mechanism became as firm, finished,

and definite as the links in a chain-mail — accurate at every point, and complete through every intricacy. The power of the human imagination, to enable men and women to assume states of mind and pass through phases of experience which it would be ruin and death actually to reach, was never better exemplified than in that impersonation; and to contemplate that power is to look into ourselves and consider our spiritual destiny, and thus to rise in the dignity of immortal life.

Booth produced astonishing effects in Macbeth. The sustained frenzy and electrical passion of the scene with the imagined spectre of Banquo, — a scene which, in its whirlwind of horror and fury, was yet controlled and made symmetrical, — created an image of terrific reality in the world of the imagination. The termination of that great scene lives in memory as a beautiful picture of lamentable desolation — the awful pathos of human grandeur in hopeless ruin. If ever Shakespeare's Macbeth was seen he was seen then, in the image of the haunted king, fiend-driven and utterly forlorn, holding his crown in his hand and gazing upon it with woful eyes, in which was the sickening consciousness of all that the worthless bauble had cost. That was always a remarkably fine point with Booth, and he reached it with consummate ability. The hurried entrance, almost a run, at "Our knocking has awaked him," was novel and had an excellent effect. Another admirable touch was the pause after "Abide within, I'll call upon you straight": irresolution, repentance, agony and the prompting of an infernal spirit were all evinced in that sinister moment. Booth made Macbeth brawny and sinewy, and in that ideal, as in his Richard, he strove to give a due emphasis

to the humanity that is allied with the wickedness, in order that pity not less than terror might be among the resultant emotions of his art.

In Othello Booth's acting, though occasionally inadequate, was always correct and always poetical, and now and then it was a magnificent fulfilment of Shakespeare's design. Sometimes, when playing the Moor, he gave the stormy passages of the third act with enormous power. Booth's Othello, I have no doubt, — comparing personal knowledge with historical testimony, — was as powerful and as pathetic as that of Edmund Kean; but only when it was at its best — the actor being then in exactly the mood for an exceptional effort. It was essential that Booth should be seen often, in each of his characters, if the observer wished to understand and appreciate him; and in no other part that he played was he so various as in Othello. On some nights the performance would be only conventional. On others it was prodigious, startling, and brilliant. The play-going community has been saturated with strange notions about Othello, derived from observance of the Italian view of the Moor, — presented by Salvini and Rossi, — which makes him a snorting animal in his love and a ferocious beast in his jealousy, concluding his career with a kind of murder such as Bill Sykes commits when he "mashes" Nancy. Persons who relish that kind of an Othello naturally considered Booth's performance tame. He did not, like Rossi, seem to sit upon Desdemona's stomach, nor did he take her scalp. He fulfilled a just and right Shakespearian ideal of pure, gentle, holy love, succeeded by a tempest of jealous frenzy and

ended with a terrible act of justice, — a retributive and august sacrifice, — by a man whose overwhelming misery has hardened into a stony despair: and his elocution, throughout that character, was perfect music.

No stronger proof of versatility could be given than the fact that Booth was equally perfect in Richelieu and in Iago. The soldier-like ease, the bland good-humour, the devilish coolness, readiness, and ingenuity, the vein of implacable malignity, — visible in lonely moments and soliloquy, — the lightning-like transitions, and the fiend-like enjoyment of sheer wickedness for its own sake, all those elements, and others, blended in his Iago with all things right and fit as to mechanical treatment, and made it the living reality of Shakespeare's design. The acting of Booth in the dark-street scene, — the showing of the sudden impulse to murder both his victims, at "How silent is this town," — could not be surpassed for its blood-curdling horror: and the horror was used, not for its mere theatrical effect, but to deepen the lines of character and heighten the colours of tragedy. As to certain points Booth adopted the traditions of the stage. His delivery of "She that was ever fair," for example, followed the model that was established in the eighteenth century by John Henderson. But as to other points he invented a new method, of which the street scene "business," original with him, was a chief beauty.

As the jester, Bertuccio, so cruelly wronged and so terrible in his scheme of vengeance, Booth gave an embodiment of horrid yet pitiable deformity, mental as well as physical. His demoniac glee, after the

abduction scene, and his hysterical outburst of supplication, before the doors of the banquet-hall, were among the most superb achievements in acting known to the modern stage. Booth introduced that character to the American theatre in 1864, and to the end of his days he stood alone in it.

In 1875 Booth adopted into his repertory the character of Richard the Second, and with the intellectual class of his auditors his success was unequivocal. In that character he expressed divinely ordained majesty and the bitter anguish and convulsion of the royal soul when overcome and prostrated by fate. Such a topic must necessarily be elusive to the apprehension of most persons. The substance of King Richard — royalty — being unfamiliar, the agony that he expresses must seem remote or motiveless. The actor's sincerity, passion, individualism, and force had to supply the needed element of reality, to vitalise the whole. The draft that the part makes upon the rarer part of the emotional nature — that is to say, upon the spirit — is enormous; and it is exacting, likewise, upon the memory and upon the executive resources. The action passes, for the most part, within the spirit, and, though uttered in strains of wonderful eloquence, is not shown in many outward symbols of deed. The foreground of Booth's performance was the embodiment of an ideal of perfect, unassailable, ingrained majesty. The rest of it was the delirium of a soul that has been cast loose from all moorings, and plunged into a grief so lonely "that God himself" — as the Ancient Mariner so terribly says — "scarce seemèd there to be." That idea Booth conveyed, with a degree of sustained power that conquered

intellectual sympathy, and with a depth of emotion and a felicity that touched the heart and satisfied the sense of grace. His variety of method, in the captivity scene, was a brilliant exhibition of the ripe skill and rich resources of dramatic art. The lines of imprecation — "Terrible hell make war upon their spotted souls!" and "Fiend thou torment'st me ere I come to hell" — and the horrid yell of amazement, rage, and pain, in the death scene, were electrical points. The greatness of the embodiment was its perfect sustainment of an ideal at the high level of one of the rarest of Shakespeare's conceptions.

Booth was the first among American actors to restore the character of Gloster to the stage as Shakespeare gives it, and to present the tragedy according to the original text. Not all the text was spoken, indeed, in his version, but all that was spoken would be found in the original play. Booth's Richard, accordingly, being built upon the poet's words, was a human being, — wicked and terrible, but not a blood-dripping butcher nor a howling bedlamite. His acting of the part gave a clear ideal with spontaneous grace and power. The bland craftiness, the remorseless energy, the leopard-like ferocity, the audacious, blasphemous hypocrisy, the sardonic humour, the iron will, the restless necessity of action, and the acute sensibility to remorse, — all of which are elements in the character, — were depicted by him with the artistic ease of second nature, and were blended into a symmetrical and fascinating image of beautiful and horrible wickedness. The sudden explosion of wrath against Hastings, in the council scene, had a peculiarly life-like effect, in the

illumination of history not less than as a dramatic climax, and the smooth dissimulation, in the scene with the mayor and citizens had, — as was inevitable when Booth caught the perfect mood of Gloster, — a quality of almost comic humour, with its magnificent deceit and diabolical assurance. At the haunted awakening, in the tent, and throughout the agonised self-communing speech that follows, Booth sustained himself in a dramatic ordeal of the most exacting description, and was the fearful and pitiable embodiment of hopeless remorse. His treatment of the battle scenes was extraordinary. He animated them with passionate fury, and his utterance of that horrible line, "My soul and body on the action, both," has not, in our time, been equalled, for the tragical element of terror.

The character of Sir Giles Overreach is undeniably strong, but it is horribly repulsive. The opportunities which it affords for the manifestation of wild rage and terrific animal excitement, thrilled by intensely wicked purpose, have always commended it to tragedians. Henderson gained much fame in it; George Frederick Cooke was great in it; and it enabled the elder Booth to win new laurels. In our time, Edwin L. Davenport and Edwin Booth played it with striking effect. Booth's performance was remarkable for quick transitions of feeling and manner, fervent intensity, and, at the last, an electrical outburst of frenzy, made awful by the coming on of death. He was scrupulously attentive to the external traits of this part. The iron-gray hair, the halting walk, the sombre yet richly-coloured costumes, harmonised with the essence of the character and made the embodiment exceedingly picturesque. Booth's own

nature was rich in qualities that are foreign to that of Sir Giles, and it was precisely wherein those qualities appeared that his personation became most enthralling to the imagination. He seemed, in many ways, an abler, finer, and more human creature than the worldly-minded villain that Massinger has drawn. A fine nature that has become depraved produces upon human sensibility an effect that is beyond the reach of inherent wickedness.

Richelieu is a figure much more grand and beauteous, as to soul, than a mere virtuous, powerful, wily ecclesiastic could possibly be accounted. If in nothing else, there is need, in his fatherly love for Julie, and his anguish over her pitiable condition, of a manhood both heroic and tender. But, deeper than this, there is need for that profound sadness which inevitably appertains to the man of genius who, on the pinnacle of success, is old, infirm, lonely, and imperilled; for whom the sweetness of love and the glory of youth have long since passed away; and who feels, in the deep recesses of his soul, the evanescence and futility of this world — even while fixing his almost dying grip on empire and power. To suggest this, there is the soliloquy at the beginning of the third act; the speech, "Her father loved me"; the sad address to old Joseph; the allusion to past love; the senile, almost doting croon over the endangered Julie; and there is the implied necessity of elevating Richelieu to an eminence above his surroundings. He is a great man who has matured through great achievements and sufferings, upon the most conspicuous field of human action; and he must seem, when represented upon the stage, — if he is to seem noble, romantic, pathetic, and fascinating, — to be se-

questered from mankind by the strange spell of a prophetic fate. His character is as potential as Cæsar's; his spirit is as magnetic; he has the temperament that age, experience, and condition render beautifully sad. Timon is not more bitterly wise than Richelieu, nor Jacques more grimly humorous.

Richelieu is essentially a theatrical part, and profound sincerity of temperament, combined with vigorous imagination and the perfection of mimetic skill, are required, to make it natural. Booth possessed those attributes and he accomplished that result. The essential principle in his acting of Richelieu was the massive repose of intellectual character. The personality that he revealed was that of self-centred, indomitable power. His Richelieu prevailed and governed, not alone by virtue of office and rank, but by inherent royalty of nature. He was a man born to rule. Booth always expressed, with an effect of great beauty and pathos, the loneliness of a great man, whose mind and experience, in lifting him far above other men, have isolated him from human companionship. The grim humour and the human foibles of the character were not omitted. The execution was marked by exquisite refinement of manner, curiously suggestive of a youth of fashion, gallantry, sentiment, romance, and courtly associations, long passed away. But all the while the condition presented was that of lofty abstraction and mournful majesty. The power inherent in imagination and feeling, to create a perfect illusion by dramatic art, was, probably, never better denoted than in Booth's presentment of the scene of the threatened excommunication. The demand there is for a formidable and tre-

mendous personality, and Booth's crowning success was that he played that scene so as to make his auditors forget the theatre. In the splendid adequacy of the effort, and in the presentation of Richelieu's dual life — the life of the ecclesiastic statesman interested in practical affairs, and the life of the world-worn, grief-stricken, lonely intellect, isolated upon the pinnacle of its grandeur — you saw the greatness of Booth's genius. Booth's Richelieu was a noble and touching image of righteous power protecting innocent weakness; and no person who saw it, with appreciation, could help being exalted in magnanimity of spirit and moral worth. It not only delighted the artistic sense of a generation of play-goers, but it was the cause of much practical good, in its influence upon society. People were made better for seeing Booth in Richelieu.

Booth's personation of Lucius Brutus showed his genius in a strong light. The former portion of it was full of singular force; the latter of intense feeling and manly dignity. The character is the Brutus who avenged Lucretia, drove the Tarquin from Rome, and sacrificed his son on the altar of devotion to his country. The dramatist, John Howard Payne, has illustrated that heroism in a four-act tragedy, the action of which culminates in the father's condemnation of the son. At first Brutus simulates madness; then, — a cause for revolt being furnished, in the crime against Lucretia, — his spirit breaks loose, and he sweeps on to vengeance. Booth was especially powerful in the imprecation against Sextus and in the address to the people, from the funeral pyre of Lucretia. But it was when portraying the struggle between natural affection

and the sense of justice, that he attained the highest eminence of pathos.

Booth's impersonation of Cardinal Wolsey, — a part that he adopted into his repertory in 1876, playing it for the first time on December 13, that year, at the Arch Street theatre, Philadelphia, — was massive, subtle, picturesque, and remarkable for beauty of elocution. His reading of the farewell speech was deeply pathetic, while his action, — expressive of the iron poise, sleepless vigilance, exalted intellectual refinement, and deep-revolving craft of Wolsey, — was, at all points, adequate and effective. He made, with admirable skill, the old, conventional points, upon the line, "How much methinks I might despise this man," and upon the exit of Wolsey with Campeius; and his portraiture of the wily churchman's self-communing, in the soliloquy on Anne Boleyn and Henry, was deeply weighted with feeling, intense with purpose, and finely diversified in manner. He made Wolsey a man who is always acting a part, and only now and then drops the mask. His performance was not consonant with history, nor was it conformable to matter-of-fact notions, but it was entirely consonant with the poetic ideal. It denoted the royalty of Wolsey's ambition and the height of intellect at which he is poised; it was fraught with the needful repression; and, at the last, it revealed a strain of pathetic feeling fully level with the high Shakespearian design.

In *Julius Cæsar*, more than in any other of Shakespeare's plays, poetry and history are one. The language of the poet is frequently an expanded paraphrase of the language of the historian. That fact should be

BOOTH AS BENEDICK.

remembered, in considering the quality of the acting, in any representation of that tragedy. There is a tendency on the stage to treat imaginative subjects in a mood of realism — to substitute fact for fancy. In presenting the tragedy of *Julius Cæsar*, however, this cannot lead the actor far wrong, seeing that fact has been religiously preserved in a halo of poetry.

Booth acted Brutus — for the second time in his life — at Christmas, 1871. His first performance of it was given at the Winter Garden, in 1864, on the occasion of the Shakespeare Benefit. He looked this part perfectly. There is a delusion that Brutus was a large man. In fact the popular idea conceives the noble Roman as invariably gigantic. There were big Romans; but the big ones were not always the most virtuous. Brutus, like Cassius, was lean and pale — and Booth's physical embodiment of the character was therefore accurate. He invested the performance with a delicate spirit; and, in the scene of the assassination and that of the midnight spectre, his profound emotion stirred the deepest sympathy. Shakespeare has been as true to the great moral law of the universe as to the fact of history. "They say blood will have blood." A tyrant is slain — but the heart of the slayer is cleft by his own sword, in expiation of the dread sacrifice. There are lessons of the gravest import to be learned from *Julius Cæsar*. Americans are apt to think that liberty is an invention of the New World and modern times. It is well to be reminded that others fought and suffered for it before America was heard of, and that the same struggle has long been going on in the world, between the effort of what is good in human

nature to establish rational freedom, and what is bad in human nature to establish slavery and the dominion of vice. To appreciate that great play is to learn the value of liberty, and to sympathise with some of the grandest ideals of heroic character and pathetic experience ever offered in literature or in life.

Booth presented the character of Ruy Blas, in an English adaptation of Victor Hugo's drama. The language of the piece is fustian, but the story is representative of an interesting phase of possible human experience. The theme is the same that Bulwer illustrated in *The Lady of Lyons*, but in *Ruy Blas* the culmination is tragic. The humble but brilliant youth, who has dared to love a queen, succeeds in lifting himself to greatness, and in winning the love that he covets; but this involves the sacrifice of his life. In the English version, *Ruy Blas* lends itself to ridicule; but the purport of the experience of Ruy Blas is not a theme for laughter. Levity and cynicism are widely prevalent in contemporary society; yet there still are women capable of inspiring a noble, romantic, self-sacrificing devotion, and there still are men whose lives may be absorbed by that influence. Booth impersonated Ruy Blas in an impassioned manner, with remarkable grace and refinement, and with carefully elaborated and picturesque treatment of the four situations that make the play. The killing of Don Salluste was managed so as to present an exciting dramatic picture; and that culmination always caused a tumult of enthusiasm.

Booth was fond of playing Don Cæsar de Bazan. The comedy in which that hero figures is one that ought to be often seen, since its humorous situations,

surprising incidents, and variety and contrast of character make it delightful. In pungent and merry lines it is exceptional and remarkable; and the character of Don Cæsar glitters through it like a sunbeam. Booth's assumption of that part did not entirely satisfy the old comedy standard, which exacts, in Don Cæsar, a swelling port, a buoyant manner, ornate embellishment, and the utmost breadth of pictorial treatment. Comedians of the Wallack order used to make a dazzling show in that character, and the tradition which they established is one that a tragedian, inured to gloomy and passionate demonstrations, could hardly be expected to sustain. Booth's embodiment of Don Cæsar was marked by winning sweetness of temperament and by graceful recklessness of demeanour, diversified by occasional thoughtfulness, and now and then by touches of deep feeling — a style kindred with that of Jefferson, and therein notable for superlative delicacy, in detail and finish. Booth suggested an ideal of human nature and character upon which it is pleasant to dwell — the ideal of generous manliness, kindly, unselfish, spontaneous goodness, reckless disregard alike of danger and of convention, and a picturesque, gypsy freedom. It is the natural doctrine of a successful man, — and no one is surprised to hear it from the lips of Henry the Fifth, — that "self-love is not so vile a sin as self-neglect." All the same, there is a fascination about the poetic vagabond, and those who saw Booth, in his younger days, as Don Cæsar, felt the full force of that allurement. Persons, indeed, who saw Booth's impersonations when he was at his best stored up for themselves such treasures of memory as no industry in

reading could compass, — for those embodiments were consummate types of the acting that is essentially tragic. It was no common privilege to see such an actor. The time has already come when men of his generation, remembering Edwin Booth in Hamlet, Richelieu, and Iago, feel the same glow of pride, and the same sense of theatrical scholarship, that their fathers felt, recalling Cooke in Sir Giles, Edmund Kean in Othello and The Stranger, the elder Booth in Richard, Brooke in Master Walter, Forrest in Damon, Macready in Tell or Werner or Macbeth, and the elder Wallack in Shylock. The works of Edwin Booth were the classics of their period in the American theatre.

It is not the number of parts an actor plays that constitutes his strength or reveals his resources; it is the height, fineness, and diversity of mind and spirit, the depth of feeling, the control of action, the knowledge of human nature, the faculty of simulation, and the trained ability, combined in his treatment of any one part, which, taken all together, make up his sum. It would have been a refreshment, no doubt, to see Booth in new parts, such as Werner and Timon; but it is not to be supposed that he would have made a fuller exhibition of his powers and resources by extending his repertory. Such as he was, he stood forth in a clear light, manifested and known; and, as Whipple trenchantly said of the critics of Shakespeare, the little persons who thought that they were measuring him, only succeeded in measuring themselves by him. To possess, not merely the text and stage business, but the action and the rich and complex variety of thought and passion that appertain to about twenty-five of

the great characters in the poetic drama, was to be amply equipped for the profession of acting. That was Booth's pre-eminence. The intellectual obligation, accordingly, was on the side of the public, not the actor. Booth did great things in his day, and always good and never harm. He did not always reach the highest heights in Shakespeare: what actor does? or, what actor ever did? His generation, however, had no reason to murmur. So far from complaining that such a man did not attempt more, the public might well be thankful that he attempted so much. It will be long, now that Booth has gone, before our stage again presents an actor whose range extends, — not on three-sheet posters, but in mind, spirit, and faculty, — from Hamlet to Overreach, from Richelieu to Don Cæsar, from Bertuccio to Brutus. Since Garrick, who was almost equally great in Lear and Don Felix, there has seldom been an equal combination of genius and versatility with scholarship and taste. Almost every great actor of the past was, in some sense, a specialist. John Phillip Kemble was superb in Coriolanus, but stiff in Hamlet: when he acted Charles Surface, it was called "Charles's martyrdom"; and when he appeared as Don Felix, the performance was recorded as very much Don and very little Felix. Barry excelled in Romeo; Macklin in Shylock; Henderson in Falstaff; Cooke in Sir Giles; Lewis in Mercutio; the elder Booth in Richard; Edmund Kean, — because his heart transcended his mind, — in Othello and the Stranger; Macready in Macbeth, Werner, and Tell; the elder Wallack in Reuben Glenroy, the Brigand, and Don Cæsar; Forrest in Virginius and Spartacus.

Edwin Booth was a specialist also, — reaching his most natural poise in passionate melancholy and poetical delirium, — and doubtless his genius has been equalled, in the long annals of the English stage; but Booth was a broader actor, in temperament and adaptability, than most of his predecessors in the illustrious line of English-speaking tragedians; and his excellence in several directions of artistic effort was without a precedent in recent stage history, and almost without a parallel in the theatre of his time.

The parts that Booth did play constitute a remarkably poetic, picturesque, and brilliant group; and, in assuming those various identities, the actor subjected himself to diversified and exacting tests. Every element in his nature and every resource of his experience and skill were enlisted to satisfy the requirements of those characters. The wealth that he displayed of imagination, passion, pathos, spiritual sublimity, romantic grandeur, grace, gloom, frenzied emotion, intellectuality, sentiment, humour, frolicsome levity, light and shadow, concentration of mind, and control of personal being and of the means and methods of dramatic art, was wonderful. To achieve only a respectable success in such a round of parts is to accomplish much; but to have maintained through them all a high altitude of merit, and more than once to have risen to the pinnacle of greatness, is to have established beyond question a rank with the foremost actors of the world, and thus with its most potent æsthetic teachers. Booth did that with brilliant proficiency and spontaneous grace. No actor is endowed and adapted so that he can act all parts equally well. With certain characters the spirit of the tragedian was but partially consonant. His Claude Mel-

notte and his Benedick were indifferent; his Stranger was artificial; his Petruchio was a bluff type of boisterous frolic. Booth was distinctively tragic, and he required characters of stalwart fibre. He was a poetical actor, and his delicate and exquisite genius tended more to beauty and symmetry than to wild and whirling emotion. He never degraded a Shakespearian conception to prose and to clay; he never substituted a paroxysm for a distinct, round, beautiful ideal. Art should understand itself and make itself understood. Acting is the presentment of definite forms transfused with fire, and those artists are its best exponents who best present those results. Such an artist was Booth; and to all such artists the world is delivered. Impatience and apathy, indeed, are their foes. To every intellectual man there comes a time when surrounding dulness and indurated folly and selfishness are irksome and irritating; and time, trouble, and sorrow have a way of imbuing, with a sober, russet colour, first the mind and then its works, and so leading in the autumn twilight of indifference. But the tenderness of a deep heart, the strength of an aspiring soul, and the cheer and promise of Nature may surely be trusted to defeat those tyrants of experience.

"Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower, —
We will grieve not; rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death;
In years that bring the philosophic mind."

III.

MEMORIALS.

"Vitæ bene actæ jucundissima est recordatio."

CICERO.

III.

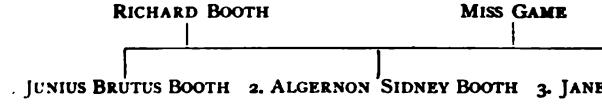
MEMORIALS.

SARGENT'S PORTRAIT OF EDWIN BOOTH AT "THE PLAYERS."

THAT face which no man ever saw
And from his memory banished quite,
With eyes in which are Hamlet's awe
And Cardinal Richelieu's subtle light,
Looks from this frame. A master's hand
Has set the master-player here,
In the fair temple that he planned
Not for himself. To us most dear
This image of him! "It was thus
He looked; such pallor touched his cheek;
With that same grace he greeted us—
Nay 'tis the man, could it but speak!"
Sad words that shall be said some day—
Far fall the day! O cruel Time,
Whose breath sweeps mortal things away,
Spare long this image of his prime,
That others standing in the place,
Where, save as ghosts, we come no more,
May know that sweet, majestic face
The gentle Prince of Players wore!

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

THE BOOTH FAMILY.



RICHARD BOOTH was the son of Elizabeth Wilkes, cousin to John Wilkes, "the agitator" (1727–1797). Richard Booth, an ardent republican, followed his son Junius to America, in 1822, and died on December 29, 1839, aged 76. On the stone that marks his grave, in Greenmount Cemetery, Baltimore, the following words are cut, beneath a cross: "Ex vita, ita descedo, tamquam ex hospito, in fervam Reguum in elytissimi Ducis illiæ ire ad Astra." Richard Booth's wife, whose maiden name was Game, died, in England, at the birth of her daughter, Jane. Of ALGERNON SIDNEY BOOTH I have no record.

JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH January 18, 1821. MARY ANN HOLMES

JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH, JR.,
ROSALIE ANN BOOTH,
HENRY BYRON BOOTH,
MARY ANN BOOTH,
FREDERICK BOOTH,
ELIZABETH BOOTH,
EDWIN THOMAS BOOTH,
ASIA SIDNEY BOOTH (Mrs. J. S. Clarke),
JOHN WILKES BOOTH,
JOSEPH ADRIAN BOOTH.

Henry, Mary, Frederick, and Elizabeth died young. Henry's death occurred in 1837, and he was buried at Pentonville, London. Rosalie died, unmarried, in 1889, aged 65. Junius Brutus Booth, Jr., was twice married, and several of his children survive. John Wilkes Booth, who shot President Lincoln, was

shot by "Boston Corbett." Asia Booth (Mrs. J. S. Clarke) left several children, one of whom, Creston Clarke, has gained auspicious reputation as an actor. Joseph Adrian Booth is the only surviving child of the great Junius.

In the preface to her book, called *Passages, Incidents, and Anecdotes in the Life of Junius Brutus Booth*, published, in New York, by G. W. Carleton, in 1866, Mrs. Clarke makes the following reference to a domestic incident in her father's early life: "By a boyish mésalliance, contracted in Brussels in the year 1814, there was one son, who, if alive, is still a resident of London, and of whom we possess no further knowledge."

A descendant in the line thus indicated was known to Edwin Booth, and was befriended by him, at Reading, in Enggland. A newspaper effort was at one time made, in New York, to harrow, distress, and extort money from Edwin Booth, on the score of his father's alleged irregularity; but it failed to elicit any response. Edwin Booth was too wise a man to care for what Lord Beaconsfield so well characterised as "the hair-brained chatter of irresponsible frivolity."

JANE BOOTH — JAMES MITCHELL

Cousins to EDWIN BOOTH:
- ROBERT MITCHELL, of Edentown, North Carolina,
- CHARLOTTE MITCHELL (Mrs. Hyde), of Baltimore, Maryland,
- ELIZA MITCHELL (Mrs. William Ward).

JANE BOOTH, with her husband, James Mitchell, and several children, came to America soon after 1821, and she died here, in 1853. Eliza Mitchell, daughter of Jane Booth Mitchell, was an actress in John T. Ford's company, in times prior to the Civil War, and was married to William Ward, also a member of Ford's company.

MRS. CLARKE'S MEMOIR.

In 1882 Mrs. Clarke's book about her father, altered, expanded, and to a large extent rewritten, was published, in association with a sketch of her brother Edwin, under the title of *The Elder and the Younger Booth*. That volume, to which the reader is referred, is one of five, called the *American Actor Series*, edited by Mr. Laurence Hutton, originally published by Messrs. James R. Osgood & Co., and now issued by Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. The series includes the Life of Edwin Forrest, by Lawrence Barrett; the Life of the Jeffersons, of four generations, by William Winter; the Life of Junius Brutus Booth and Edwin Booth, father and son, by Asia Booth Clarke; the Life of Charles Fechter, by Kate Field; and the Life of Mary Duff, by Joseph N. Ireland. Mrs. Clarke sketched her father in about a hundred pages, and her brother in about fifty, and performed a difficult task with delicate taste and gentle feeling. Her manner is simple and direct. She evidently sacrificed analysis and description to the necessity of bringing the material facts of the subject within a brief compass; and, while reverent and affectionate in spirit, she wisely avoided the air of personal eulogy, by a free use of the words of other writers, carefully culled from the journals of the past, to record the triumphs and celebrate the virtues of her honoured relatives. Mrs. Clarke's work, however, is not so much a biography as a collection of materials. There is no background to the picture; there are but few references to the persons with whom the elder Booth was associated; there is no exposition of the state of the stage in his time; upon the darker chapters in his experience — so grotesque, humorous, and sad — there is scarcely a touch; nor was the attempt made to state, in a sympathetic form, the substance and salient qualities of his nature as an actor. The chief facts of his career are set down;

the astonishing effects that he produced are denoted; and this testimony is rounded with a tribute to his mental power and moral worth. The sketch of Edwin Booth is a synopsis of events, with scarcely a comment. For the purpose of biography there is advantage in possessing a man's knowledge of men. If Thomas Flynn, the comedian, or the late James Oakes, had written a life of the elder Booth, while it might not have been as delicate, it must have preserved more of his essential character, and thus have been a more valuable aid to the study of that human nature which underlies dramatic art. Junius Booth was an original and formidable person, an austere yet gentle philosopher, and a dominant power upon the stage of his time. Mrs. Clarke's account of the elder Booth's farm at Belair is a fresh and bright piece of writing, and the summary of the actor's character and the account of his funeral evince the warmth of an affectionate heart.

PLAY-BILL AT THE CENTENARY OF BOOTH'S HAMLET, 1865.

WINTER GARDEN THEATRE,

1854-55. *(Inaugurated Monday, September 18, 1854.)* 1864-65.

No. 624 BROADWAY, OPPOSITE BOND STREET.

11TH SEASON. 32D WEEK.

MANAGER . . . . . MR. WILLIAM STUART.

WEDNESDAY EVENING, MARCH 22, 1865.

BENEFIT OF MR. EDWIN BOOTH.

SOUVENIR PROGRAMME.

One Hundredth Night of "Hamlet."

This Evening, for the Final and One Hundredth Consecutive Night Performance,

"HAMLET,"

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS, BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

HAMLET.....**Mr. EDWIN BOOTH**
CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark.....S. K. CHESTER
GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER.....CHARLES KEMBLE MASON
POLONIUS, Lord Chamberlain.....G. H. ANDREWS
LAERTES, Son to Polonius.....J. G. HANLEY
HORATIO, Friend to Hamlet.....CHARLES WALCOTT, JR.
OSRIC, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, Courtiers, ...OWEN FAWCETT; .....J. DUELL; .....W. F. BURROUGHS
MARCELLUS, BERNARDO, Officers, ...MR. BURGESS; .....MR. DILLON
FRANCISCO, a Soldier.....NELSON DECKER
FIRST ACTOR.....MR. CLINE
SECOND ACTOR.....MR. EVANS
FIRST GRAVEDIGGER.....E. A. EBERLE
SECOND GRAVEDIGGER.....MR. FITZGERALD
PRIEST.....MR. EVERDELL
GERTRUDE, Queen of Denmark, and Mother to Hamlet, MRS. J. W. WALLACK, JR.
OPHELIA, Daughter of Polonius.....MRS. FRANK S. CHANFRAU
ACTRESS.....MRS. S. K. CHESTER

Lords, Ladies, Pages, Officers, Guards.

ORCHESTRAL SELECTIONS.

1. *OVERTURE.*—"Hamlet".....*Stoepel*
(Introducing the Danish National Hymn.)
2. *INTRODUZOINE AND POLONAISE*.....*Meyerbeer*
(Written for the Danish play, "Struensee.")
3. *GALOP.*—"Danish Hussars".....*National*
4. *GRAND MARCH.*—"Lohengrin".....*Wagner*
5. *FANTASIE*.....*Stoepel*
(On Ophelia's Songs and other Tunes of Shakespeare's Time.)

The Tragedy has been placed upon the Stage, under the immediate direction of MR. BOOTH, by J. G. HANLEY, Stage Manager.

The Music all expressly composed, selected and arranged by ROBERT STOEPEL.

THE PRODUCTION AND MEMORABLE RUN OF "HAMLET."

Initial Performance, Saturday Evening, November 26, 1864.

25th Night.....Saturday, December 24, 1864.
50th Night.....Monday, January 23, 1865.
75th Night.....Tuesday, February 21, 1865.
100th Night.....Wednesday, March 22, 1865.

Thursday, March 23, Shakespeare's Play of "Othello."

IAGO.....MR. EDWIN BOOTH
OTHELLO.....CHARLES BARRON

THE HAMLET MEDAL.

AT the close of his presentation speech [p. 42], Judge Fullerton hung the medal upon the actor's neck. Booth replied: —

It is impossible for me to respond in fitting terms to the graceful, eloquent, and very complimentary words just spoken. While accepting the beautiful token of your appreciation of my professional merits, I am still more proud to have your estimation of me as a man. It behooves me to say that I am thankful. "Beggar that I am, I am poor in thanks." Accustomed to conceal my feelings beneath the player's mask, I find it difficult to express them. Therefore I beg you will receive these three simple words, I thank you, — the very utmost of my ability in speech-making, — as the sincere expression of an humble and grateful heart.

Then, turning to the audience, Booth said: —

To you, to whom I owe so much, who have so generously sustained me, I beg leave, likewise, to tender my most grateful acknowledgments. The debt I owe you can never be paid, but I trust that my future endeavours as an actor, and my conduct as a man, will ever deserve your approval and support.

THE WILKES BOOTH TRAGEDY.

Letters.

PARKER HOUSE, BOSTON, 7 O'CLOCK, A.M.
Saturday, April 15, 1865.

EDWIN BOOTH, ESQ.

My Dear Sir: A fearful calamity is upon us. The President of the United States has fallen by the hand of an assassin, and I am shocked to say suspicion points to one nearly related to you as the perpetrator of this horrid deed. God grant it may not prove so! With this knowledge, and out of respect to the anguish which will fill the public mind as soon as the appalling fact shall be fully

revealed, I have concluded to close the Boston theatre until further notice. Please signify to me your co-operation in this matter.

In great sorrow, and in haste,

I remain, yours very truly,

HENRY C. JARRETT.

FRANKLIN SQUARE, BOSTON, April 15, 1865.

HENRY C. JARRETT, ESQ.

My Dear Sir: With deepest sorrow and great agitation, I thank you for relieving me from my engagement with yourself and the public. The news of the morning has made me wretched indeed, not only because I have received the unhappy tidings of the suspicions of a brother's crime, but because a good man, and a most justly honoured and patriotic ruler, has fallen, in an hour of national joy, by the hand of an assassin. The memory of the thousands who have fallen in the field, in our country's defence, during this struggle, cannot be forgotten by me, even in this, the most distressing day of my life. And I most sincerely pray that the victories we have already won may stay the brand of war and the tide of loyal blood. While mourning, in common with all other loyal hearts, the death of the President, I am oppressed by a private woe not to be expressed in words. But whatever calamity may befall me and mine, my country, one and indivisible, has my warmest devotion.

EDWIN BOOTH.

BOOTH'S THEATRE.

PRECAUTION FOR THE PUBLIC SAFETY.

IN Booth's theatre ample precaution was taken against fire. Between the flies were rows of perforated pipes through which the water could be forced and sprayed upon the hanging scenery. The pipes were controlled by valves in each fly-gallery, upon which, during performances, a corps of stage carpenters was always stationed. There were five hundred feet of "regulation" hose, with fire-butts in each corner

of the auditorium and the stage. Mr. Magonigle caused the members of the mechanical department of the theatre to be organised into a fire-brigade, with the master carpenter as the chief. A large bell hung over the proscenium-arch, which was known as the "fire-bell," and it was never to be used for any other purpose than to sound a fire-alarm. The stage, above and below, and the auditorium, were divided into districts, and, in case of alarm, the bell would indicate the location of the fire, so as to send the brigade to the exact place of danger. Fire rehearsals occurred, at intervals of two weeks—the exact time being known only to the business manager, the chief, and the janitor. [The family of the latter lived in the theatre, and he was apprised in order that there might be no needless trouble.] These precautions were so much appreciated by the insurance companies that they considered the risk of fire one and a half or two per cent less than at any other theatre in the city, at that time.

THE BOOTH FESTIVAL, JUNE 1880.

(*From the N. Y. Tribune, May* 31 *and June* 8, 1880.)

It was made known some time ago that Edwin Booth would go to England this summer, and it is probable that he will make a professional appearance in London and other European capitals. His career on the American stage has been one of nobly ambitious effort, splendid achievement and commanding importance; and it seems eminently proper, on the eve of his departure from his native land, that his fellow-citizens should formally testify their sense of the worth of his labours, and their appreciation of his character. Booth has always upheld the highest standard in theatrical affairs, and largely to his personal example and influence it is due that we possess a stage

that — with all its defects — is yet worthy of intellectual respect, and can rightly be viewed as a credit to our civilisation.

Those views have prompted Mr. Booth's friends to arrange for him a farewell banquet, at which the voice of appreciation and the kindly sentiment of the American public with regard to him may make itself heard with no uncertain sound. This tribute takes the form of a breakfast, which is to occur on June 15, at Delmonico's, in this city, and at which the attendance of representative men — not residents of New York alone, but of other cities — will be large. The committee of arrangements consists of the Hon. John R. Brady, chairman; George W. Carleton, treasurer; Lester Wallack, Joseph Jefferson, Lawrence Barrett, Whitelaw Reid, William Winter, Algernon S. Sullivan, Charles Watrous, Laurence Hutton, E. C. Stedman, Jervis McEntee, J. R. Osgood, the Rev. H. W. Bellows, Horace Porter, and S. R. Gifford. The letters which have passed between Mr. Booth and his friends, expressing the motive, spirit, and design of the proposed tribute, are an essential part of the dramatic record.

NEW YORK, May 22, 1880.

TO EDWIN BOOTH, ESQ.

Dear Mr. Booth: In view of your projected journey to Europe, it is the earnest desire of your many friends in this community to give an expression, — not less cordial because formal and public, — to the high esteem in which you are held, and to their sense of the honour you have reflected upon the American stage, and the excellent and ennobling influence which, throughout a long, arduous, and brilliant career as an actor, and also as a manager, you have exercised upon the American public.

Acting upon this desire, and wishful, — while doing you honour, and expressing their affectionate good-will, — to signalise your departure, and to speed you to a generous welcome on the other side of the Atlantic, your friends beg that you will accept the testimonial of a farewell breakfast, to be given at Delmonico's, on Tuesday, June 15, at 12 M.

You will there meet, not only with many comrades of your own profession, but with representatives of other vocations, all of whom are united in a grateful admiration and a profound and constant esteem, not alone for your noble achievements as an actor, but for those virtues which have made your public career a model of integrity and your home life a blessing to all who have known you.

Very respectfully, your friends,

* JOHN R. BRADY,	WILLIAM WINTER,
* REV. H. W. BELLOWS,	* JERVIS MCENTEE,
* ALGERNON S. SULLIVAN,	* S. R. GIFFORD,
CHARLES WATROUS,	WHITELAW REID,
E. C. STEDMAN,	* REV. F. C. EWER,
HORACE PORTER,	LAURENCE HUTTON,
* LESTER WALLACK,	* J. R. OSGOOD,
JOSEPH JEFFERSON,	GEORGE W. CARLETON.
* LAWRENCE BARRETT,	

* Dead.

HOTEL BRUNSWICK, June 2, 1880.

GENTLEMEN: The gratification with which I receive your flattering offer is not wholly unalloyed — for this is the first tribute of the kind that I have been bold enough to accept, and my pleasure is mingled with the trepidation of the novice.

The character of "distinguished guest" is a new one for me, and my inexperience may make my assumption of it unworthy both of the occasion and the high opinion of my abilities that you have been pleased to express.

Like many "a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon the stage," in the vain endeavour to express the emotions that inspire him, I may only succeed in "signifying nothing." But, though my outward action fails to show "the native act and figure of my heart," believe me, all within is gratitude for your affectionate consideration; and the feeling of the moment is only darkened by a sense of my own unworthiness.

As a mere empty compliment, I might decline the favour; but as the expression of an affectionate good-will, such as no man has more cause than I have to cherish in his "heart of heart," and as

a token of your genuine good wishes for my success in other lands, I heartily receive it — taking your love, "not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous."

I can only add that, whatever may be my professional fate in Europe, I shall exert the utmost of my limited ability to merit your indorsement.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWIN BOOTH.

To HON. J. R. BRADY, REV. H. W. BELLOWS, WHITELAW REID, JOSEPH JEFFERSON, WILLIAM WINTER, A. S. SULLIVAN, and others.

POEM BY WILLIAM WINTER.

Delivered at the Farewell Breakfast in honour of Edwin Booth, given by many of his friends, at Delmonico's, New York, June 15, 1880.

I.

HIS barque will fade, in mist and night,
Across the dim sea-line,
And coldly on our aching sight
The solemn stars will shine —
All, all in mournful silence, save
For ocean's distant roar —
Heard where the slow, regretful wave
Sobs on the lonely shore.

II.

But, oh, while, winged with love and prayer,
Our thoughts pursue his track,
What glorious sights the midnight air
Will proudly waft us back!
What golden words will flutter down
From many a peak of fame,
What glittering shapes of old renown
That cluster round his name!

III.

O'er storied Denmark's haunted ground
  Will darkly drift again,
Dream-like and vague, without a sound,
  The spectre of the Dane;
And breaking hearts will be the wreath
  For grief that knows no tear,
When shine on Cornwall's storm-swept heath
  The blazing eyes of Lear.

IV.

Slow, 'mid the portents of the storm
  And fate's avenging powers,
Will moody Richard's haggard form
  Pace through the twilight hours;
And wildly hurtling o'er the sky
  The red star of Macbeth, —
Torn from the central arch on high, —
  Go down in dusty death!

V.

But — best of all! will softly rise
  His form of manly grace —
The noble brow, the honest eyes,
  The sweetly patient face,
The loving heart, the stately mind
  That, conquering every ill,
Through seas of trouble cast behind,
  Was grandly steadfast still!

VI.

Though skies might gloom and tempest rave,
  Though friends and hopes might fall,
His constant spirit, simply brave,
  Would meet and suffer all —
Would calmly smile at fortune's frown,
  Supreme o'er gain or loss;
And he the worthiest wears the crown
  That gently bore the cross!

VII.

Be blithe and bright, thou jocund day
That golden England knows!
Bloom sweetly round the wanderer's way,
Thou royal English rose!
And English hearts [no need to tell
How truth itself endures!]
This soul of manhood treasure well,
Our love commits to yours!

VIII.

Farewell! nor mist, nor flying cloud,
Nor night can ever dim
The wreath of honours, pure and proud,
Our hearts have twined for him!
But bells of memory still shall chime,
And violets star the sod,
Till our last broken wave of time
Dies on the shores of God.

GERMAN TROPHIES.

TRIBUTARY offerings received by Booth while acting in Germany, and now preserved at the Players' Club, New York, are inscribed as follows: —

Silver Spray of Laurel Leaves.

THALIA THEATRE, HAMBURG.
EDWIN BOOTH.
By the Director and Members.
Hamburg, February 21, 1883.

Silver Crown of Laurel Leaves.

BREMEN STADT THEATRE, February 24–28, 1883.
HAMLET, LEAR, OTHELLO.
To the great Artist,
EDWIN BOOTH.
The Company of the Bremen Stadt Theatre.

Silver Crown of Laurel Leaves.

RESIDENZ THEATRE, BERLIN.

To the unrivalled Artist,

EDWIN BOOTH,

as a friendly remembrance of his celebrated first appearance in Germany. Dedicated by the Director and Members of the Residenz Theatre at Berlin.

Silver Wreath of Laurel.

STADT THEATRE, LEIPZIG, March 19–21.

EDWIN BOOTH.

From the Stadt Theatre at Leipzig.

The satisfaction with which Booth regarded his professional experience in Germany is pleasantly signified in a letter that he wrote to me, from Berlin, on January 11, 1883: —

"MY DEAR WILL: I have just accomplished the one great object of my professional aspiration. 'Tis after one o'clock, and I am very weary, but cannot go to bed without a line to you. I have not written to you for some weeks, it seems, nor have I heard from you lately. My reason — I wished to send you something of interest. What's yours? I cannot tell you of my triumph to-night without a gush of egotism — and you know how difficult that is for me. Therefore, I'll let M. tell you the particulars. O, I wish you had been present to-night! When I am cooler I will try to give you a full account of the night's work. The actors as well as the audience were very enthusiastic, many of the former kissing my hands and thanking me over and over again — for what I know not, unless it was because they recognised in me a sincere disciple of their idol Shakespeare. . . . I scratch in great haste, with a wretched pen and scarcely ink enough to fill it. In a future letter I'll be more explicit. . . . Well, this is the realisation of my twenty years' dream! What shall I do now? Act in Italy and France? No. . . . Good-night, dear boy. I thought to have written you a long letter, but I am too tired. Good-night. God bless you. — EDWIN."

ADDRESS BY EDWIN BOOTH.

Delivered at the Dedication of the Actors' Poe Memorial, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, May 4, 1885.

IT was my privilege to have a leading hand in the first dramatic performance that was given for the purpose which to-day is accomplished. For this reason, and, also, because my countrymen have vouchsafed to me a prominent place in the dramatic profession, it is thought proper that I should participate in the exercises of the occasion, speaking on behalf of the actors of New York, and in their name presenting our memorial of Poe to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. This duty it is equally an honour and a pleasure to perform. I believe that I speak the sentiment of the whole dramatic profession, when I declare that the American stage is proud and glad to have been the means of paying this tribute to American literature. The art of the actor is peculiarly sensitive to the bond of fraternity which unites all the arts in one family, but its kindred is nearest and its obligation is deepest to the art of the poet. Without Shakespeare the stage would lack its chief resources of power, influence, beauty, and renown. Poe was not a dramatic poet. He wrote little in the dramatic form — nothing that was ever acted. Yet he was truly a poet, in his prose as well as in his verse, and every thoughtful actor is aware that the success of theatrical art is considerably due to the influence of poetry on the public mind, an influence which allures it to all that is beautiful, majestic, or otherwise impressive in the acted representation of human life. It always would be proper for the stage to honour a true poet. In this instance there was a special reason for the tribute that has been offered. Poe was the child of actors. He has himself referred to his mother, Elizabeth Arnold, as "a woman, who, although well born, hesitated not to consecrate to the drama

her brief career of genius and beauty." This was at a time when the theatre was less respected than it is at present. In the author of *The Raven*, the *Manuscript found in a Bottle*, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, and *The Haunted Palace*, actors, like other readers, recognise a being of strange endowments — a writer who, in the magnificence of his conceptions, the weirdness of his pictures, and the vitality of his diction, has rivalled even the wonderful originality and splendour of Coleridge. But they remember, also, with a sentiment of personal pride, that he was a man of theatrical lineage. While deploring his faults, they exult in his noble intellectual powers and his ever-growing renown. America may hail him as her most original author. The stage will always rejoice in him as one of her children. The gypsy blood that runs in her veins ran also in his, and in the exuberance of his imagination she sees the power and the freedom of her own wild spirit.

To the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in the name of the actors of New York and of the friends who assisted in their work, I now present this memorial of Edgar Poe. Here may it be preserved, under the reverent protection of American scholarship, a permanent tribute to genius, and a lasting memento of sympathy and admiration, until, in the long flight of years, this structure, with all its hallowed memorials of the past, shall have crumbled into dust!

ADDRESS BY EDWIN BOOTH.

Delivered at the Dedication of the Actors' Monument, in Evergreens Cemetery, Long Island, June 6, 1887.

COMRADES: We have met here to-day for a noble purpose. The cause of our assembly is a hallowed one, worthy of the highest eloquence, and I feel but too keenly my inefficiency

for the part with which you have honoured me; yet I trust that the brevity of my discourse will atone for its inadequacy.

To consecrate to our dead play-fellows a testimonial of our ever-living sympathy with their trials and disappointments, and of our recognition of their worth, is to discharge a duty we owe, not to them alone, but to ourselves and to our deathless art.

Time has not grown so very old since the most prominent members of our profession, though admired by the public eye, and lauded by its tongue, were, socially, viewed askance, and regarded as "merely players." Even in the days of our great sire, Shakespeare, those actors only who wore the livery of some titled family were exempted from the brand of vagabondage, — which is, in truth, the cruel condition of our calling. The actor can hardly have a permanent abode; yet, homeless as he has been, as he may ever be, in the pursuit of his vocation, — which renders all but a fortunate few nomadic, — he has, despite the evil eye of prejudice and the temptations that beset him, struggled for, and found, by the blessed light of civilisation, a welcome residence in the affections of his fellow-beings.

It is not essential to speak of the "golden opinions from all sorts of people" that have been earned by theatrical artists of to-day. From all quarters come reports of homage paid to the refining influence of the drama. Like the great world itself, the theatre has its evils; but, as the real world progresses, slowly, perhaps, but surely, to a higher condition, so surely does the mimic world advance; and the merits and demerits of the actor are weighed as fairly as are those of other mortals, his virtues as emphatically rewarded, his fame as preciously preserved.

In England's grand old abbey lie some of our illustrious leaders, while memorials of others of our craft, elsewhere buried, are honoured there, among monuments raised to names of the highest worth and station. In a far humbler form, this

our modest beacon will denote the no less sacred home of the poor player, to whom, with fervent prayer for God's blessing, we, his brothers and sisters, dedicate this shrine of our affectionate veneration.

SPEECH BY WILLIAM WINTER.

Delivered at a supper in honour of Edwin Booth, given by Augustin Daly and Albert M. Palmer, at Delmonico's, New York, at midnight, March 30, 1889, to signalise his establishment of the Players' Club.

IT was my fortune, many years ago, to be present in the old Boston theatre on a night when that famous American actor, Edwin Forrest, at the close of an exceedingly prosperous engagement, represented Hamlet and delivered a farewell address. I can see him now, as I saw him then, — not the most intellectual nor the most brilliant figure in our theatrical history, but certainly the most colossal, the most imposing, the most definite, impressive, inspired animal individuality that ever has been seen upon the American stage; and I can hear his voice as I then heard it, when, as he gazed upon a vast assemblage of the public, and upon the stage that was literally covered with flowers, he said, — in those magnificent, vibrating, organ tones of his, which never in our day have been equalled or approached, — "Here, indeed, is a miracle of culture — a wilderness of roses, and not a single thorn!" To-night it is my fortune to be present at this memorable feast of tribute to genius and virtue, and to behold his great and famous successor in the leadership of tragic art in America, surrounded by friends, who greet him with affection no less than homage, and who honour themselves rather than him, by every denotement of respect and appreciation they possibly can give to Edwin Booth: and I can imagine that he also, looking upon your eager, happy, affectionate faces, and listening to your genial eloquence, in

this scene of light and perfume and joy, of high thought and sweetly serious feeling and gentle mirth, may utter the same exclamation of grateful pride: "Here, indeed, is a miracle of culture — a wilderness of roses, and not a single thorn!"

For if a man eminent in public life and illustrious in the realm of art may not indulge a sentiment of honest pride and grateful exultation at such a moment as this, I know not when he may indulge it. Honours are sometimes given where they are not due; but in those cases, although they are accepted, they are not enjoyed. In the present instance they flow as naturally and as rightly to the object of our esteem as rivers flow to the sea. Edwin Booth adopted the profession of the stage when he was in his sixteenth year, and he has been an actor close on forty years. Looking back upon that long career of ambitious and noble labour and achievement, I think he must be conscious — I know that we who have observed and studied it are conscious — that he has been animated, in every minute of it, by the passionate desire, not to magnify and glorify himself, but, through the ministration of a great and beautiful art, to stimulate the advancement of others, to increase the stock of harmless pleasure, to make the world happier and nobler, and to leave the stage a better institution than it was when he found it. Speaking with reference to actors in general, it might perhaps justly be said that it is the infirmity of each one of them to consider himself as the centre of a solar system around which everything else in the creation revolves. Not so with the guest of this occasion, the hero of this festal hour — the favourite of our fancy and the comrade of our love! For he "has borne his faculties so meek, has been so clear in his great office," that whether on the golden summits of prosperity or in the valley of the shadow of loss and sorrow, his gentle humility of disposition, his simple fidelity to duty, his solid sincerity of self-sacrificing character, and his absolutely guileless and blameless conduct of life have been equally conspicuous with his supreme

dramatic genius, his artistic zeal, and his glittering renown. Edwin Booth's fame is assured, and I think it stands now at its height; and no artistic fame of our generation can be accounted brighter; but the crowning glory of it is the plain fact that an occasion like this, representative to him of the universal sentiment and acclamation of his time, is simply the spontaneous acknowledgment that grateful sincerity awards to genuine worth. My words about him, on another festival occasion, in this same place, may fitly be repeated now: —

Though skies might gloom and tempest rave,
Though friends and hopes might fall,
His constant spirit, simply brave,
Would meet and suffer all —
Would calmly smile at fortune's frown,
Supreme o'er gain or loss;
And he the worthiest wears the crown
That gently bore the cross!

It was not to tell Edwin Booth that he is a great actor, and it was not to tell him that he is dear to the hearts of his friends, that this assemblage has been convened. The burning of incense is a delightful and often a righteous occupation, and of all the duties that your Shakespeare has taught there is no one that he urges with more strenuous ardour than that of whole-hearted admiration for everything that is noble and lovely in human nature and conduct. Him at least you never find niggard and reticent in his praise. But, as I apprehend it, the motive of this occasion was the desire to express, for our own sake, our sense of obligation to Edwin Booth for the lesson of his life. As the years drift away, as the shadows begin to slope to the eastward, as the first faint mists mingle with the light of the sinking sun, nothing impresses me so much as the imperative need that we should preserve the illusions of a youthful spirit, and look upon this world, not in the cold and barren light of

fact, but through the golden haze of the imagination and the genial feelings. To some men and women it is granted that they can diffuse this radiant glamour of ideal charm. Like a delicate perfume that suddenly comes upon you from a withered rose, or a bit of ribbon, or a tress of hair, long hallowed and long preserved; like a faint, far-off strain of music that floats on a summer breeze across the moonlit sea; they touch the spirit with a sense of the beauty and glory, the mystery and the pathos of our existence, and we are lifted up and hallowed and strengthened, and all that is bitter in our experience and sordid in our surroundings is soothed and sweetened and glorified. They teach us hope and belief, instead of doubt and despondency, and thus, in a world of trouble and sorrow, giving to us the human patience and the spiritual nobility which more than anything else we need, they

> "Shed a something of celestial light
> Round the familiar face of every day."

It is because Edwin Booth has been in this way a blessing to his generation that we are met to thank him; and furthermore it is because, in a period that greatly requires nobility of practical example, he is a vital and influential and conclusive proof that an actor may know and may fulfil his duty to his time. What that duty is you will not expect any speaker here to declare. I will but ask you to recall what the American stage was when he came upon it, over thirty years ago, and to consider what it is now, and to whose influence mainly its advancement is due. And I will but add that when you stand beneath the stupendous majesty of St. Paul's cathedral, and look upon the marble which commemorates its great architect, you may read one sentence that is the perfect flower of simplicity and eloquence, — "If you would behold his monument, look around you!"

BOOTH'S LATEST PROFESSIONAL TOURS.

TOUR OF EDWIN BOOTH. SEASON 1886–1887.

1886.

September	13, 14, 15, Buffalo, N. Y.	Academy
"	16, 17, 18, Detroit, Mich.	Opera House
"	20, Bay City, Mich.	"
"	21, East Saginaw, Mich.	"
"	22, Kalamazoo, Mich.	Academy
"	23, Grand Rapids, Mich.	Opera House
"	24, 25, Milwaukee, Wis.	"
"	27, 28, 29, Minneapolis, Minn.	"
"	30, October 1, 2, St. Paul, Minn.	"
October	4 to 16, Chicago, Ill.	Chicago Opera House
"	18, St. Louis, Mo.	Opera House
"	25, Cleveland, Ohio	"
November	1 to 27, New York City	Star
"	29, Brooklyn, N. Y.	Park
December	6 to 18, Boston, Mass.	Theatre
"	20, Worcester, Mass.	"
"	21, Holyoke, Mass.	Opera House
"	22, Albany, N. Y.	"
"	23, Utica, N. Y.	"
"	24, Oswego, N. Y.	"
"	25, Syracuse, N. Y.	"
"	27, Rochester, N. Y.	"
"	28, Bradford, Pa.	"
"	29, Elmira, N. Y.	"
"	30, Scranton, Pa.	Academy
"	31, Wilmington, Del.	Opera House

1887.

January	1, Lancaster, Pa.	Opera House
"	3 to 15, Philadelphia, Pa.	"
"	17, Baltimore, Md.	Theatre
"	24, Pittsburgh, Pa.	Opera House
"	31, Cincinnati, Ohio	"

February	7, 8, 9, Louisville, Ky.	Theatre
"	10, 11, 12, Memphis, Tenn.	"
"	14, New Orleans, La.	Opera House
"	21, 22, Galveston, Texas	"
"	23, Houston, Texas	"
"	24, Dallas, Texas	"
"	25, Austin, Texas	"
"	26, San Antonio, Texas	"
"	28, March 1, 2, Travel.	
March	3, 4, 5, Los Angeles, Cal.	"
"	7 to April 2, San Francisco, Cal.	Theatre
April	4 to 9, Yosemite.	
"	10, 11, Travel.	
"	12 to 16, Salt Lake City, Utah	Theatre
"	18, Cheyenne, W. T.	Opera House
"	19 to 23, Denver, Col.	"
"	25, 26, Omaha, Neb.	"
"	27, St. Joseph, Mo.	"
"	28, 29, 30, Kansas City, Mo.	Coates Opera House

TOUR OF EDWIN BOOTH — LAWRENCE BARRETT. 1887–1888.

September	12, 13, 14, Buffalo, N. Y.	Academy
"	15, 16, 17, Detroit, Mich.	Opera House
"	19, Minneapolis, Minn.	Theatre
"	26, Duluth, Minn.	Opera House
September	27, Eau Claire, Wis.	"
"	28, Oshkosk, Wis	"
"	29, 30, October 1, Milwaukee, Wis.	"
October	3 to 22, Chicago, Ill.	Chicago Opera House
"	24, Kansas City, Mo.	Warder Opera House
"	31, St. Louis, Mo.	Olympic Theatre
November	7, Cincinnati, Ohio	Grand Opera House
"	14, Cleveland, Ohio	Opera House
"	21, Pittsburgh, Pa.	"
"	28 to December 10, Philadelphia, Pa.	"
December	12 to 24, Boston, Mass.	Theatre
"	26 to January 7, New York City	Academy
January	9, Baltimore, Md.	Holliday Theatre
"	16, Richmond, Va.	Theatre

January	17, Charleston, S. C.	Theatre
"	18, Savannah, Ga.	"
"	19, Macon, Ga.	Academy
"	20, 21, Atlanta, Ga.	Opera House
"	23, 24, 25, Nashville, Tenn.	"
"	26, 27, 28, Memphis, Tenn.	Theatre
"	30, 31, Chattanooga, Tenn.	Opera House
February	1, 2, Birmingham, Ala.	"
"	3, Montgomery, Ala.	Theatre
"	4, Mobile, Ala.	"
"	6, New Orleans, La.	Opera House
"	13, 14, Galveston, Texas	"
"	15, Houston, Texas	"
"	16, 17, Dallas, Texas	"
"	18, Fort Worth, Texas	"
"	20, Waco, Texas	"
"	21, Austin, Texas	"
"	22, 23, San Antonio, Texas	"
"	24, 25, 26, Travel.	
"	27, Los Angeles, Cal.	Opera House
March	5 to 24, San Francisco, Cal.	Theatre
"	26, San Jose, Cal.	"
"	27, Stockton, Cal.	"
"	28, Sacramento, Cal.	"
"	29, 30, 31, Travel.	
April	2, Denver, Col.	Opera House
"	9, 10, 11, Omaha, 'Neb.	"
"	12, Lincoln, Neb.	"
"	13, Topeka, Kan.	"
"	14, Wichita, Kan.	"
"	16, Leavenworth, Kan.	"
"	17, St. Joseph, Mo.	"
"	18, Des Moines, Ia.	"
"	19, Cedar Rapids, Ia.	"
"	20, Dubuque, Ia.	"
"	21, Davenport, Ia.	"
"	23, Peoria, Ill.	"
"	24, Springfield, Ill.	"
"	25, Bloomington, Ia.	"
"	26, Terre Haute, Ind.	"

April	27, Indianapolis, Ind.	Opera House
"	28, Indianapolis, Ind.	"
"	30, Lafayette, Ind.	"
May	1, Fort Wayne, Ind.	"
"	2, Kalamazoo, Mich.	Academy
"	3, Grand Rapids, Mich.	Opera House
"	4, Bay City, Mich.	"
"	5, East Saginaw, Mich.	"
"	7, Ann Arbor, Mich.	"
"	8, Springfield, Ohio	"
"	9, Dayton, Ohio	"
"	10, 11, 12, Louisville, Ky.	Exposition
"	14 (week), Williamsburgh, N. Y.	Amphion Academy

TOUR OF EDWIN BOOTH — LAWRENCE BARRETT. 1888–1889.

1888.

September	10, Kansas City, Mo.	Warder Opera House
"	17, 18, 19, Minneapolis, Minn.	Grand Opera House
"	20, 21, 22, St. Paul, Minn.	" "
"	24 (3 weeks), Chicago, Ill.	Chicago Opera House
October	15, Cincinnati, Ohio	Grand Opera House
"	22, St. Louis, Mo.	Olympic Theatre
"	29, Idle.	
November	5, Idle.	
"	12 (8 weeks), New York City	Fifth Avenue Theatre

1889.

January	7, Pittsburgh, Pa.	Grand Opera House
"	14, Baltimore, Md.	Holliday Street Theatre
"	21 (4 weeks), Boston, Mass.	Boston Theatre
February	18 (3 weeks), Philadelphia, Pa.	Chestnut Street Opera House
March	11, Trenton, N. J.	Taylor's Opera House
"	12, Bridgeport, Conn.	New Opera House
"	13, New Haven, Conn.	Hyperion Theatre
"	14, Hartford, Conn.	Roberts' Opera House
"	15, Holyoke, Mass.	Holyoke Opera House
"	16, Springfield, Mass.	Gilmore's Opera House
"	18, Providence, R. I.	Providence Opera House
"	25, Williamsburgh, N. Y.	Amphion Theatre

April	1, Scranton, Pa.	Academy of Music
"	2, Elmira, N. Y.	Opera House
"	3, Rochester, N. Y.	Lyceum Theatre
"	4, 5, 6, Buffalo, N. Y.	Academy of Music
"	8, 9, Toledo, Ohio	Wheeler Opera House
"	10, 11, 12, 13, Detroit, Mich.	Detroit Opera House
"	15, 16, 17, Cleveland, Ohio	Euclid Avenue Opera House
"	18, Columbus, Ohio	Metropolitan Opera House
"	19, 20, Indianapolis, Ind.	English's Opera House
"	22, Burlington, Iowa	Grand Opera House
"	23, Des Moines, Iowa	Moore's Opera House
"	24, 25, Sioux City, Iowa	Peavey Grand Opera House
"	26, 27, Omaha, Neb.	Boyd's Opera House
"	29, Denver, Col.	Tabor Grand Opera House
May	6, 7, 8, Salt Lake City, Utah	Salt Lake Theatre
"	13, (4 weeks), San Francisco, Cal.	California Theatre
June	10, Los Angeles, Cal.	Grand Opera House
"	17, California Towns.	
"	24, Portland, Ore.	New Park Theatre

TOUR OF EDWIN BOOTH — MME. MODJESKA. 1889–1890.

1889.

September	30 (week), Pittsburg, Pa.	Grand Opera House
October	7 (week), Cleveland, Ohio	Euclid Avenue Opera House
"	14 to December 7, New York City	Broadway Theatre
December	9, Auburn, N. Y.	Opera House
"	10, Utica, N. Y.	"
"	11, 12, Syracuse, N. Y.	Wieting Opera House
"	13, 14, Rochester, N. Y.	Lyceum Theatre
"	16 (week), Harlem, N. Y.	Hammerstein's Opera House
"	23, Rest.	
"	30, Rest.	

1890.

January	6, Providence, R. I.	Providence Opera House
"	13, Fall River, Mass.	Academy of Music
"	14, Holyoke, Mass	Opera House
"	15, Springfield, Mass.	Gilmore's Opera House
"	16, New Haven, Conn.	Hyperion Theatre
"	17, 18, Hartford, Conn.	Opera House

January	20 to February 1, Boston, Mass.	Boston Theatre
February	3, Bridgeport, Conn.	Opera House
"	4 to 8, Brooklyn, N. Y.	Academy of Music
"	10 to 22, Philadelphia, Pa.	Chestnut Street Opera House
"	24 to March 8, Baltimore, Md.	Holliday Street Theatre
March	10 to 29, Chicago, Ill.	Chicago Opera House
"	31 (week), St. Louis, Mo.	Olympic Theatre
April	7 (week), Cincinnati, Ohio	Grand Opera House
"	14 to 16, Detroit, Mich.	Detroit Opera House
"	17, Toledo, Ohio	Wheeler Opera House
"	18, East Saginaw, Mich.	Academy of Music
"	19, Grand Rapids, Mich.	Powers' Opera House
"	21, 22, Milwaukee, Wis.	Grand Opera House
"	23, Cedar Rapids, Iowa	Greene's Opera House
"	24, Davenport, Iowa	Grand Opera House
"	25, Peoria, Ill.	" "
"	26, Decatur, Ill.	" "
"	28, Bloomington, Ill.	Durley Theatre
"	29, Indianapolis, Ind.	English's Opera House
"	30, Vincennes, Ind.	Opera House
May	1, 2, 3, Louisville, Ky.	Amphitheatre Auditorium
"	5, Dayton, Ohio	Opera House
"	6, Zanesville, Ohio	"
"	7, Wheeling, W. Va.	"
"	8, Youngstown, Ohio	"
"	9, 10, Buffalo, N. Y.	Star Theatre

1890–1891.

The last Booth and Barrett season began on November 3, 1890, at Albaugh's theatre, Baltimore. The record is as follows: —

1890.		
November	3, Baltimore,	2 weeks.
"	10, "	
"	17, Philadelphia,	2 weeks.
"	24, "	
December	1, Boston,	2 weeks.
"	8, "	
"	15, Providence	1 week.

Barrett had previously opened the season, without Booth, in the West, and had acted without him for six weeks.

Booth then rested, — Barrett acting without him for ten weeks. On March 2, 1891, Booth again appeared with Barrett, at the Broadway theatre, New York. They acted together there until Barrett's death, on March 20. Booth played one week at the Broadway theatre, and one week (March 30) at the Academy of Music in Brooklyn, making his last appearance there, at a matinee, on April 4, 1891, as Hamlet.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF BOOTH.

1833 . . . Edwin Thomas Booth born November 13, at Belair, Maryland. Remarkable shower of meteors.

1849 . . . First appearance on the stage, at the Boston Museum.

1850 . . . First appearance on the New York stage, September 27, at the National theatre.

1851 . . . Acted Richard the Third, for the first time.

1852 . . . Went to California with his father.
Death of the elder Booth, November 30.

1854 . . . Visited Australia, and the Samoan and Sandwich Islands.

1856 . . . Left California for the East, in September.

1857 . . . Appeared at the Boston theatre on April 20, as Sir Giles Overreach.
Appeared at Burton's Metropolitan theatre, New York, May 14, as Richard the Third.

1860 . . . Married to Miss Mary Devlin, July 7. Sailed for England soon after marriage.

1861 . . . First appearance in London, at the Haymarket, as Shylock, September.
Edwina Booth born, at Fulham, London, December 9.

1862 . . . Reappeared in New York, at the Winter Garden, September 29.

1863 . . . Death of Mrs. Booth, February 21.
Began management of the Winter Garden theatre, September 21.
1864 . . . Acted Bertuccio, March 28, at Niblo's Garden.
Hamlet was produced at the Winter Garden theatre.
November 25. *Julius Cæsar* was acted at the Winter Garden theatre, with Junius, Edwin, and John Wilkes Booth in the cast.
1865 . . . One hundredth night of *Hamlet* at the Winter Garden, March 22.
April 14. Terrible tragedy at Washington. Booth retired from the stage.
1866 . . . January 3. Booth reappeared, at the Winter Garden, as Hamlet.
February 1. Fine production of *Richelieu*, at Winter Garden.
December 29. Booth and Davison, at Winter Garden, acted together, as Iago and Othello.
1867 . . . January 27. Presentation of the Hamlet Medal.
January 28. Revival of *The Merchant of Venice*, at Winter Garden.
March 22–23. The Winter Garden was burnt down.
1868 . . . The corner-stone of Booth's theatre was laid, April 8.
November 3. Booth and Mme. Janauschek acted together, at the Boston theatre, in *Macbeth*.
1869 . . . Booth's theatre was opened, February 3, with *Romeo and Juliet*.
June 7. Booth was married to Miss Mary F. McVicker.
Othello was produced April 12.
1871 . . . Fine production of *Julius Cæsar*, at Booth's theatre, Christmas night.
1873 . . . Booth retired from management.
1874 . . . Booth was led to become bankrupt.
1875 . . . Booth was released from bankruptcy, in March.
Was thrown from his carriage, at Cos Cob, Connecticut, and seriously injured.
October 25. Reappeared in New York, at the Fifth Avenue theatre.

1876 . . . Prosperous tour of the Southern States, January 3 to March 3. Revisited California, after twenty years' absence.

November 20. Began long engagement at the theatre in Fourteenth Street, New York. Closed the same, January 26, 1877.

1877–78 . Prompt-Books published: fifteen volumes.

1879 . . . April 23. Attempt to assassinate Booth, at Chicago, by Mark Gray.

1880 . . . April. Acted Petruchio, at the Madison Square theatre, New York, for the benefit of the Poe Memorial.[1]

[1] The poet Poe was the son of an actor and actress. Poe's mother, Miss Elizabeth Arnold, was a member of Solee's Company, which acted in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston, in 1797. That company appeared at the John Street theatre, New York, on August 18, 1797, and performed *The Wonder* and *The Spoiled Child.* In the latter piece Miss Arnold acted Maria. Ireland, in his excellent *Records*, remarks that "she was young and beautiful, and she became a very pleasing *comedienne* and songstress, and was attached to the Park theatre in 1809." She was an English woman. Her portrait presents a countenance of much simplicity. She became the wife of David Poe of Baltimore, a young law-student, with whom she eloped, and who, — being then disinherited by his father, for marrying an actress, — went upon the stage. But Mr. Poe never succeeded as an actor. "The gentleman," says Ireland, "was literally nothing." His first appearance in New York was made on July 18, 1806, as Frank, in *Fortune's Frolic.* His wife, however, was talented and attractive. Mr. and Mrs. Poe appear to have led a wandering life. They had three children, — of whom Edgar, the poet, was the second, — and they were in Boston at the time of his birth, January 19, 1809. Mrs. Poe died on December 8, 1811, of pneumonia, at Richmond, Va., and her husband died three days later, of consumption. He had been a hard drinker, and probably the insanity that springs out of intemperance was transmitted to his son, whose sorrow-laden career is well known to the world. Poe died October 7, 1849 — so long ago that all that related to his private life is fast fading into the oblivion which ought always to enshroud the commonplaces of human existence and the sins and weakness of human nature. Only the fruits of his genius remain; only the memory of his brilliant powers and achievements is the property of the world.

1880 . . . June 15. Booth Festival at Delmonico's.
June 30. Sailed for England.
November 6. Booth appeared at the Princess's theatre, London, as Hamlet.

1881 . . . Presented *King Lear*.
Season ended, at the London Princess's, March 29.
Appeared at the Lyceum, London, May 2, as Othello, with Henry Irving as Iago.
June 19. The Lyceum engagement ended.
Reappeared in New York, at Booth's theatre, October 3.
Death of the second Mrs. Booth, November 13.

1882 . . . May 31. Sailed for England.
Reappeared at the Princess's theatre, June 26.
Tour of the English provincial cities, September 11 to December 16.

1883 . . . Appeared at Berlin, January 11. Visited other German cities. Closed his tour of Germany, April 7, at Vienna, and returned to America.

1885 . . . Delivered address, at the dedication of the Poe Memorial, May 4.
Booth and Mme. Ristori acted together, in *Macbeth*, at the Academy of Music, New York, May 7.

1886 . . . Booth and Salvini acted together, at the Academy of Music, New York, in *Hamlet* and *Othello*, April 26, 28, and 30, and May 1.

1887 . . . Booth delivered address at dedication of the Actors' Monument.
The Booth-Barrett combination was formed, September 13.

1888 . . . May 21. Booth acted Hamlet. Testimonial in honour, and for benefit, of Lester Wallack. Metropolitan Opera House, New York. The cast included: —

Lawrence Barrett	as	The Ghost
Frank Mayo	"	The King
John Gilbert	"	Polonius
Eben Plympton	"	Laertes
John A. Lane	"	Horatio
Charles Hanford	"	Rosencrantz

Lawrence Hanley	as	Guildenstern
Charles Koehler	"	Osric
E. H. Vanderfelt	"	Marcellus
Herbert Kelcey	"	Bernardo
Frank Mordaunt	"	Francisco
Joseph Wheelock	"	First Actor
Milnes Levick	"	Second Actor
Joseph Jefferson	"	First Gravedigger
W. J. Florence	"	Second Gravedigger
Henry Edwards	"	Priest
Helena Modjeska	"	Ophelia
Gertrude Kellogg	"	The Queen
Rose Coghlan	"	Player Queen

[Lester Wallack died September 6, 1888.]

1888 . . . Booth founded the Players' Club, December 31.

1889 . . . Mme. Modjeska joined the Booth-Barrett Company.

Booth had a slight stroke of paralysis, at Rochester, New York, April 3.

1890 . . . November 13. Booth's 57th birthday was celebrated by the people of Belair, his birthplace. His portrait, painted by Louis Dietrich, of Baltimore, was placed in the Belair court-house, and he was entertained at a banquet in Baltimore. Booth and Barrett acted that night at the Lyceum theatre, Baltimore, in *Julius Cæsar*.

The people of Belair presented to Booth a picture on a panel of wood, 12 × 18 inches, made from the cherry-tree at his father's farm, in which he played when a boy, and which had to be cut down because of its great age. The painting shows a cherry-branch, garnished with cherries, and two birds flying near. [The Booth farm is now owned by family of Kyle.]

1891 . . . Death of Lawrence Barrett, March 20, at Windsor hotel, New York.

April 4. Booth's last appearance on the stage.

1893 . . . Final illness began, April 19.

June 8. DEATH.

BOOTH'S LAST APPEARANCE.

On the occasion of Booth's last appearance on the stage, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, on Saturday afternoon, April 4, 1891, as Hamlet, the characters in the tragedy were cast as follows: —

Hamlet	Edwin Booth
Ghost	Albert Bruning
King Claudius	Frederic Vroom
Polonius	Benjamin G. Rogers
Laertes	Beaumont Smith
Horatio	John A. Lane
Rosencrantz	Rankin Duvall
Guildenstern	Edward Vroom
Marcellus	George Hazleton
Bernardo	Herbert Pattee
Francisco	W. R. S. Morris
Osric	Charles Rankin
Priest	G. Davidson
First Actor	James Taylor
Second Actor	Charles Forrest
First Gravedigger	Wilfred Clarke
Second Gravedigger	Frank Lodge
Ophelia	Minna Gale
Queen Gertrude	Annie E. Proctor
Player Queen	Keith Wakeman

TRIBUTES.

With profound regret I learn of our President's death. Booth was, certainly, the greatest tragic actor of his time, and, beyond dispute, the noblest figure, as man and actor, our stage has known this century. We shall not look upon his like again.

Augustin Daly.

London, June 8.

My heart goes out in deepest sorrow to you all.

JOSEPH PROCTOR.

BOSTON, June 8.

The whole world mourns with you. Accept the assurance of my deepest sympathy.

WILSON BARRETT.

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, June 8.

The sympathy of our country, the prayers of our profession, and the love of God be with you in your affliction.

THOMAS W. KEENE.

NEW YORK, June 8.

Am profoundly grieved over the death of the illustrious actor, and my honoured friend of many years.

JOHN RUSSELL YOUNG.

PHILADELPHIA, June 8.

Please accept, from the lodge, and from me, our sincere sympathy. We join with you in grief over the death of one who had the love and respect of every member of our fraternity. We shall never look upon his like again.

MAYLIN J. PICKERING,
Shakespeare Lodge, A. O. E.

PHILADELPHIA, June 8.

After yourselves, no one can grieve more profoundly than I.

ADAM BADEAU.

ALANDALE, NEW JERSEY, June 8.

Deepest sorrow, sympathy, and love. Edwin Booth's noble life is a perpetual blessing. Let us live by his example.

WILLIAM WINTER.

MENTONE, CALIFORNIA, June 8.

Too late to reach you, but use my name if you like. Convey to fellow-members of the Players' Club and to the bereaved family the sincere condolences of one who for nearly forty years was among Mr. Booth's most devoted and admiring friends.

PARKE GODWIN.

BAR HARBOUR, MAINE, June 8.

To Clement Scott, New York: —

Have seen J. L. Toole, John Hare, H. Beerbohm-Tree, Charles Wyndham, W. H. Kendal, George Alexander, and Arthur Chudleigh, representing the English actors. Lay a wreath upon Booth's grave, from the English actors, whom please represent. We all loved him.

HENRY IRVING.

LONDON, June 8.

THE BOOTH MEMORIAL WINDOW.

THE window placed by Edwin Booth to commemorate his first wife is in the Bishop Berkeley Memorial Church, a beautiful building, situated in a lovely, sequestered place at Newport, Rhode Island. It shows a full-length figure of Mary Devlin Booth, standing, with a dove clasped to her bosom. The figure was copied from a painting of her by W. J. Hennessey.

THE BOOTH BURIAL PLACE.

THE burial place of the Booth family is in Greenmount Cemetery, Baltimore, Maryland. The spot is marked by a shaft of white marble, set upon a base of gray granite that is covered with thick-clustering ivy. The height of the structure is fifteen feet six inches, the base being five feet square. Around that monument, — which was erected by

ribbon, rested on the lid; and a wreath of laurel, oses, and palms, was carried behind it, when it was nto the church. The pall-bearers were Joseph Jeffer- lbert M. Palmer, Charles P. Daly, Eastman Johnson, Howard Furness, William Bispham, and Thomas Bailey . Parke Godwin had been named as a pall-bearer; ng far away, — in a remote part of Maine, — he was o attend the funeral. The mourners that followed the re Mr. and Mrs. Ignatius Grossman (Edwina Booth), C. Anderson, Joseph A. Booth, Mrs. William Bispham, pham, Mrs. De Wees, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Magonigle two daughters, Creston Clarke, Junius Brutus Booth, oth, Mrs. John B. Schoeffel (Agnes Booth), Mr. and n Douglas, and Mrs. Alfred Grossman. As the entered the church Chopin's Funeral March was by the organist, Mr. J. P. Dod. The service lasted n minutes. At twenty-five minutes past ten the eft the church, the organist performing the Dead *ul.* Among the persons present were: C. W. H. Stoddart, Harry Watkins, John Albaugh, Stuart h Haworth, E. H. Sothern, Sidney Woollett, aniel Frohman, F. F. Mackay, Louis Aldrich, i, J. B. Schoeffel, Charles Barnard, H. C. y, Antonio Pastor, H. C. Rockwood, William Becks, S. M. Kent, Francis Wilson, Evert ard Hooley, Mme. Ponisi, Mrs. Louisa Gale Haynes, Mrs. A. M. Palmer, Mr. , Miss Julia Arthur, Chandos Fulton, e, R. O. Doremus, W. S. Andrews, n, Charles E. Carryl, Austin Brere- n T. Malone, Charles Hanford, ler Matthews, Arthur F. Bowers, A. Dithmar, Hart Lyman, H. E. W. H. Frost, Franklin Fyles,

Dr. Charles Phelps, I. N. Ford, J. R. Towse, and G. E. Woodberry. Clement Scott, of the *London Telegraph*, — who chanced to be passing through New York, on his wedding tour, — was present, as the formally appointed representative of Henry Irving, J. L. Toole, E. S. Willard, John Hare, H. Beerbohm-Tree, Charles Wyndham, W. H. Kendal, George Alexander, and A. Chudleigh, of the English stage. Among the flower-pieces placed upon the altar was a massive lyre, made of red roses, sent by those actors, inscribed with the words: "From brother actors of Edwin Booth. We all loved him." A floral star and standard, sent by the Actors' Fund, and a floral pillow, sent by the Forrest Lodge, Actors' Order of Friendship, were also displayed. The vicinity of the church in Twenty-ninth street was densely crowded. After the funeral ceremony was ended, the hearse and carriages, with the body and the mourners, proceeded up Fifth avenue to Forty-third street, and through Forty-third street to the Grand Central railway station, whence the body was conveyed to Boston, — by the train starting at 11 A.M., — attended by Mr. and Mrs. Grossman, Mr. and Mrs. Magonigle, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, Joseph A. Booth, Junius B. Booth, Sidney Booth, and T. B. Aldrich. At half-past five the train reached the Boston and Albany station, where still another numerous company was assembled, the dramatic profession being represented by the venerable Joseph Proctor and his wife and daughter, H. M. Pitt, William Seymour, Napier Lothian, George Wilson, Joseph Sullivan, Shirley Smith, George Riddle, Miss Annie Clarke, and Mrs. M. A. Pennoyer. The funeral cortege, proceeding to Mount Auburn, was joined by Gen. W. W. Blackmar, Professor Joseph Pierce, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, Mrs. Leopold Morse, and other friends; and just at sunset all that was mortal of Edwin Booth was laid in the grave.

"Pray for him, gentle souls, whoe'er ye be."

BOOTH'S GRAVE.

THE sepulchre of EDWIN BOOTH is in Anemone Path, near Spruce Avenue, Mount Auburn. He was laid beside his first wife, MARY DEVLIN. The remains of his infant son, EDGAR,[1] — child of his second wife, MARY F. MCVICKER, — are also there buried. The spot is marked by a monument, bearing these inscriptions: —

North side:

MARY, WIFE OF EDWIN BOOTH.
Born May 19, 1840.
Died Feb. 21, 1863.

South side:

The handful here, that once was Mary's earth,
Held, while it breathed, so beautiful a soul,
That, when she died, all recognised her birth,
And had their sorrow in serene control.

"Not here! not here!" to every mourner's heart
The wintry wind seemed whispering round her bier;
And when the tomb-door opened, with a start,
We heard it echoed from within, — "Not here!"

The verses were written by T. W. Parsons — himself now passed away.

On a small stone over the grave of the child is the following inscription: —

North side:

EDGAR.

South side:

EDGAR, INFANT SON OF EDWIN AND MARY F. BOOTH.
July 4, 1870.

[1] The boy Edgar, born in Booth's theatre, New York, died almost immediately after his birth, to the great disappointment and grief of his parents.

Writing to me on December 11, 1881, from the Vendome, in Boston, Booth made this allusion: —

"Have been to Mount Auburn to-day, and as I looked at my baby's headstone, I wondered how I should explain to those who visit Molly's grave that it is not her boy lying there beside her: whether I had better place a slab there, to Mary's memory, though buried in Chicago."

BOOTH'S LETTERS.

In the course of the many years during which I was blessed with his friendship, Edwin Booth addressed to me between three and four hundred letters. From one of them, which came in a time of bitter affliction, I shall venture to print an extract here, — because, to the friends who mourn for him, it will seem like a personal message from beyond the grave, and it will fitly close this humble and reverent record of his life: —

Boston, April 23, 1886.

Dear Will: . . . Look forward to the near future, in which life is sure and everlasting. Think of our sorrows, and rejoice that your boy has escaped the common lot of suffering! Think, as I have thought, in all my many trials that —

> "The worst is not, so long as we can say
> 'This is the worst.'"

Consider how brief is the very longest sojourn here; how soon you will have your boy again. As I sat by what I believed would be Edwina's death-bed, the thought of her dear mother was always present, and I thanked God for her early death, — which spared her the sufferings she would have endured, in the misfortunes that so frequently have befallen me. So let your mind reflect, and grow strong in hope and faith.

I cannot grieve at death. It seems to me the greatest boon the Almighty has granted us. Consequently I cannot appreciate the grief of those who mourn the loss of loved ones, particularly if they

go early from this hell of misery to which we have been doomed. A friend of mine, who has never known sorrow, told me once that she "had no doubt of Heaven being a very delightful place, but, for the present, her home was good enough for her." She goes to church twice every Sunday, too. The shadow of death is now over her home; and, if it falls, I've no doubt her grief will be excessive — as her happiness has been. . . .

Man's life is but a span, though it be a century long; and who knows how soon you and the dear mother may go to join the angel-guide? When I last saw my mother alive, she had just entered her eighty-fourth year, after a weary battle of certainly sixty years of sorrow. Her face was seamed with wrinkles, in every one of which could be plainly seen the ravages of suffering. No one ever loved his parent dearer than I; and yet, for years, I prayed, — silently, deeply, in my soul, — for her release: and when it came, and I was hastily summoned to her death-bed, I found the weary old woman transformed into a most beautiful object, — so beautiful that I would not have believed it to be my poor old mother's corse, had I seen it by mere chance. The natural grief that possessed me, from the moment I was summoned until I raised the cloth from her dear face, ceased at once, and my soul said, "God be thanked!" And I was happy in her happiness, — which the good God revealed to me in the exquisite loveliness of her dead features. . . . It is God's sign-manual of Immortality. In it I see more than all the books and all the pulpits teach. "I have looked upon the world for (nearly double) four times seven years, and since I could distinguish" good from bad, I have regarded what men term misfortune as the best tonic an apathetic spirit can receive. Horatio, as Hamlet depicts him, —

> "As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
> A man, that Fortune's buffets and rewards
> Has ta'en with equal thanks,"

I have always regarded as the type of the true being. [Your selection of those lines, as a motto for your early sketch of my life, was most appropriate. I hope they will be my epitaph, if I have one, for they are true.] Horatio is not a stoic, but a calm, firm believer: —

> "With meditating that she must die once,
> I have the patience to endure it now."

Those are words that have more meaning to me than they convey to him who contemns philosophy as "cold comfort." All my life has been passed on "picket duty," as it were. I have been on guard, on the lookout for disasters, — for which, when they come, I am prepared. Therefore I have seemed, to those who do not really know me, callous to the many blows that have been dealt me. Why do not you look at this miserable little life, with all its ups and downs, as I do? At the very worst, 'tis but a scratch, a temporary ill, to be soon cured, by that dear old doctor, Death — who gives us a life more healthful and enduring than all the physicians, temporal or spiritual, can give. You have advised me well, in my perplexities, and I am therefore bold in advising you. God bless you!

EDWIN.

✠

"Dignum laude virum
Musa vetat mori."

✠

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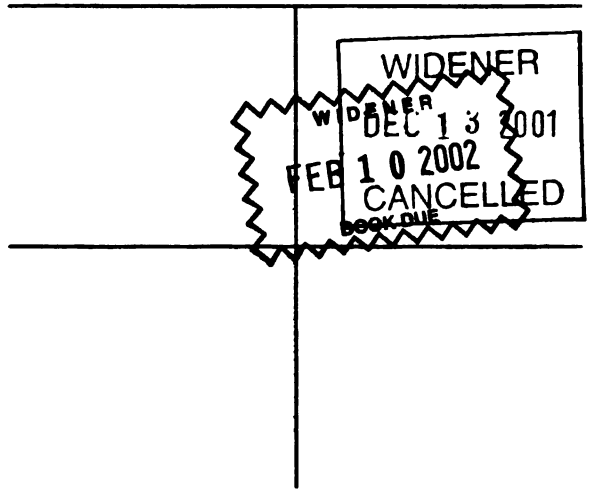

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